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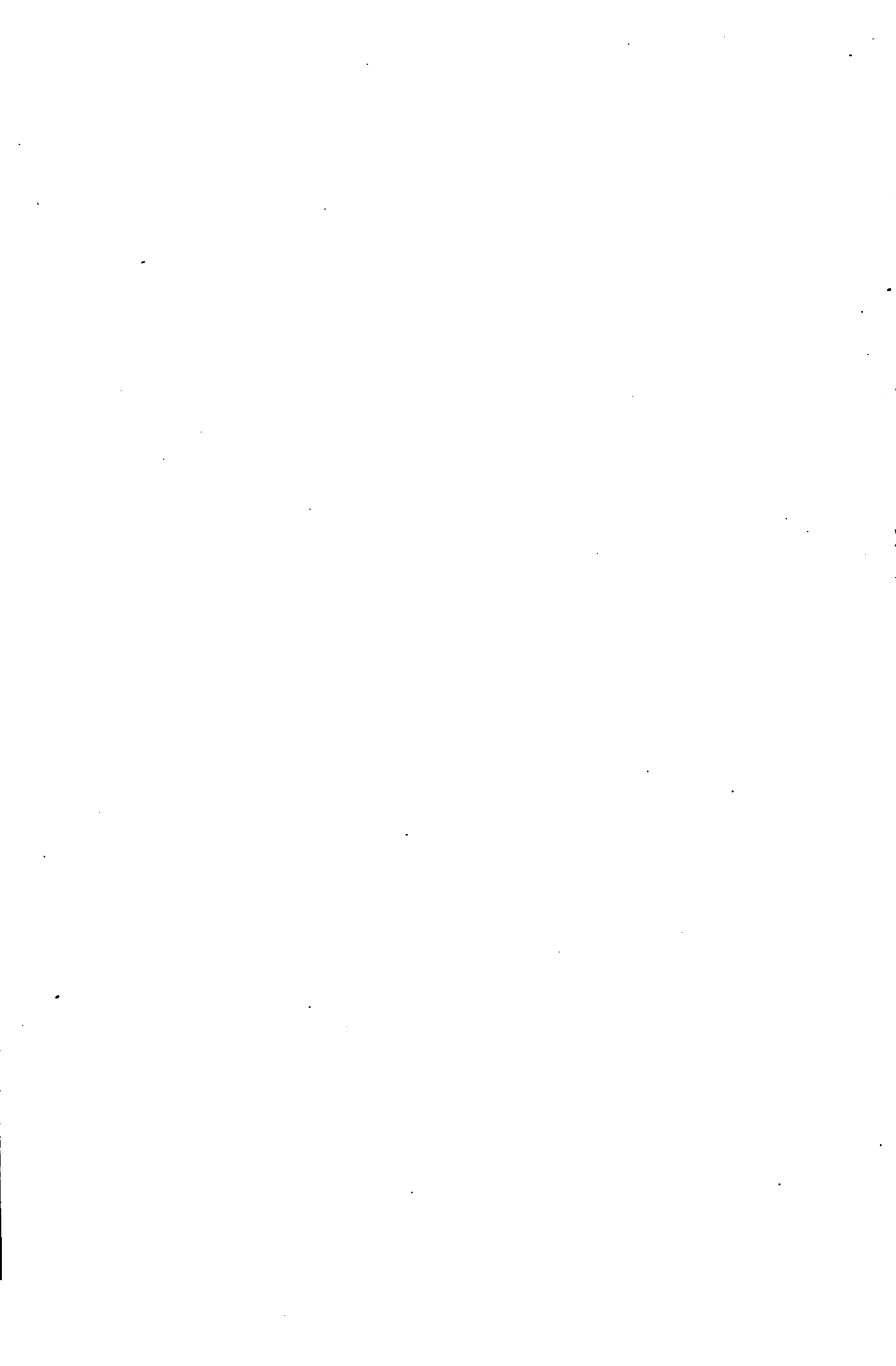
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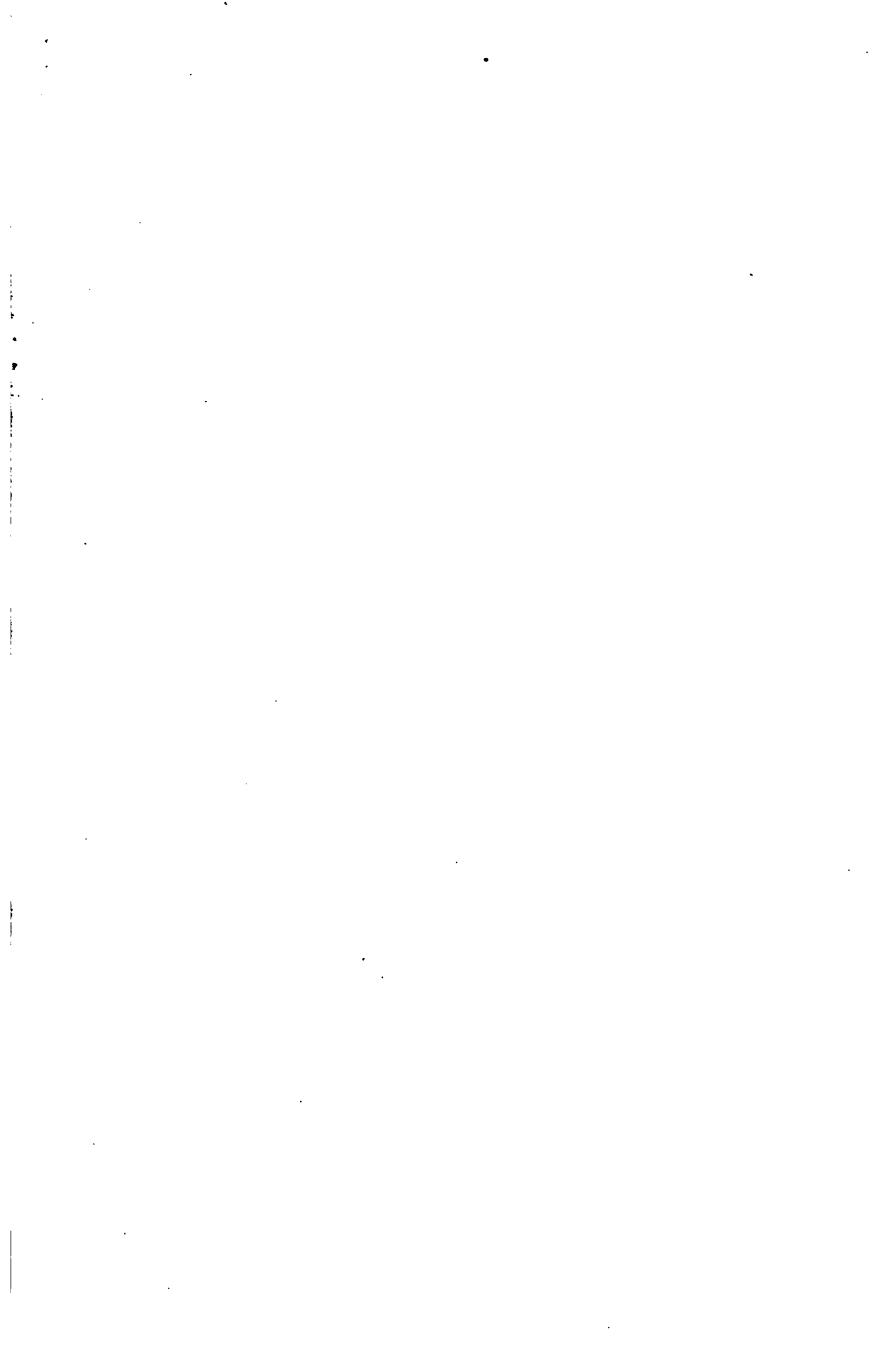
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Toronto,

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THE LION AND THE LILIES:

A TALE OF THE CONQUEST.

THE LION AND THE LILIES

A TALE OF THE CONQUEST

And Other Poems

BY

CHARLES EDWIN JAKEWAY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

No more opportune time than this year of the "Diamond Jubilee" could have been chosen for the appearance of a collection of poems so full of patriotic fire as these of Dr. Jakeway's. Long urged to publish a volume of his verse, the Author has yielded happily at a time when the daughter-nations of our British Motherland are gathering about her to celebrate with becoming splendor and dignity the sixtieth year of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria's glorious reign.

We believe these fine patriotic poems will strike a responsive chord in the hearts of all Canadians, of whatever origin—and not of them only, but of our fellow-subjects in other climes whose pride it is to own allegiance to the "meteor flag of England." With more than mere mercenary motives, the Publisher hopes for a wide circulation of this admirable volume.

Toronto, *May 24th, 1897.*

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THE LION AND THE LILIES:

A TALE OF THE CONQUEST.

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

LAKE George for liquid miles lay stretched away,
Red-litten by the gleams of rising day.
The fog-veil on its misty brim afar
With crimson curtained the horizon's bar,
And fluttered o'er the lake's fair cincture green
In fleecy cloudlets soft and opaline,
Above which soared in majesty benign
The lofty-plumaged, skyward-pointing pine,
And piercing through in quaint, fantastic shapes
Were rocky headlands and broad bushy capes.
The clouds on high with fond maternal glow
Held out their arms unto the mists below,
And beck'd unto their bosoms children born
Upon the cold, drear couch of dawning morn,
And longed with mother-love to lave their wings
Within the glory, that the great sun swings

From Heaven's censer o'er the waking world.
The softly-smiling water sweetly curled
Its pouting lips to kiss the bold-browed beach,
As maiden-modesty with coy upreach
Salutes in love the soldier's martial cheek.
Tower after tower, and peak o'er-looming peak,
The boundless forest-greenery soared past
The eye's scant vision, past the brain's far-cast,
Into unknown immensity beyond
The ken of man, and subject to the bond
Of fabled monsters, fierce and ogre-fed,
That lived between the living and the dead.
A roll of bird-song, ocean-vast in sound,
In music-billows swelled and pealed around
The bosky hills, and from the spiry trees
Rang out cathedral-bells upon the breeze,
That skyward climbed into the boundless dome,
The purest earth-born echo from the home
Of God, of seraph, star-strung, music sweet,
That throbs and thrills around the Mercy-seat.

II.

Beneath a drooping hemlock, that o'er-hung
The dimpling waters, stood an Indian, young,
Erect and handsome, proud, and full of grace,
A worthy scion of a warlike race.
His flashing eyes betokened by their gleams
The fervor of his wakeful morning dreams,
As here and there he pierced with rapid gaze
The faint rifts cradled on the mystic haze.

Anon, he swayed his swart right arm on high,
The soul-fire snapped in either haughty eye,
And from his full lips burst the pent-up flow
Of thought, word-moulded, and in molten glow.
"I swear before the God of earth and sky
To win that white-faced maiden, yea, or die!
What's life to man without the thing he craves?
What's life to cowards, fools and moping slaves,
Who hesitate to grasp the gifts of life,
And, laggards, loiter in the rear of strife?
I'd rather die at once, than mope and drone
Existence out, unsatisfied and lone!
Man lives but once, and lives as live the leaves,
A plaything light for every blast that heaves
A wayward sigh across the face of earth.
Man lives, at best, e'en from his very birth,
A period of pain, and grief, and sin;
So aught that can be won I'm bound to win.
The power of woman's love I've laughed to scorn,
And brushed aside, like dew-chains of the morn,
The toils it would entwine around my soul.
But lo! I saw her, and the firm control
I held upon my heart-reins burst in twain.
With uncurbed breast-throbs passionate with pain
Of longing, almost hopeless love, I spurned
The simple maidens of my race and burned
For fierce emprise and daring deeds of arms,
Where I might triumph over death's alarms
To win a warrior's glorious trophy meet,
And lowly lay it at my loved one's feet.

I sought and found a stricken, bloody ground
Where death-shrieks mingled with the booming sound
Of white man's weapons, winged with hissing fire,
Gained all that ardent hope could e'er desire
And thence, my body girdled with a belt
Of scalps, I proudly went to her and knelt
As one might to a goddess or a queen.
A glance she gave, and then with startled mien
And air of deep disgust disdained my proof
Of bravery and love, while I aloof
Was thrust with threats and stabs of stinging scorn.
I'll be avenged ! I'll plant a venomed thorn,
Full well befanged with many a fiery dart,
Deep in her father's domineering heart,
That will entwine its fibres firmly round
And barb with nettled— Ah ! an echoed sound
On muffled mist-wings wafted o'er the lake !
What can it be ?—My warriors awake !
The foemen come ! Like stealthy serpents glide
Adown the swale to where the Frenchmen bide
Their coming, and alarm the sleeping camp !—
They go, my faithful braves, from couches damp
At my behest with breasts athirst for blood !
May it be poured in many a spouting flood
From bleached-out bosoms ere the day is done !
I see them now. The just awakened sun
Peers round the morning's gray-lined, foggy cowl,
And blood-gleams tint the brazen horns that howl
Discordant music from their blatant throats.
Line after line the bayonet-bristling boats

In pompous, boastful pride appear and push
Anear the seeming-solitary bush.
To-day, instead of fighting, I will sneak
Aside, and when the strife is hot will wreak
Revenge on her, and on her haughty sire,
By snatching eagle-like my heart's desire
And speeding far toward the sunset west,
My talons folded round the dove's soft breast."

III.

The cymbal's clash, the drum-beat's rhythmic swell,
The bugle's martial clangor rose and fell
In strains proclaiming Britain's matchless might,
And challenging all-comers to the fight,
As on the sandy beach the soldiers sprang,
And British cheers throughout the wildwood rang.
Stout hearts were there as ever faced a foe,
Or braved a breach to lay a standard low;
But little skilled in forest-fight were they,
To skirmish, scout, or scent a secret way,
To guard against surprise or ambushade
In narrow glen or gloomy forest glade.
With laugh and jest they pushed their noisy way,
As more on pleasure bent than warlike fray,
And little thought that creeping by their ranks,
And swarming silently along their flanks,
Were couchant braves, like waiting beasts of prey,
Anxious to rush upon the gay array,
And quench their heathen thirst with draughts of gore.
Through ferny, queachy labyrinths, and o'er

Rock-ledges plodded on the straggling ranks,
While teasing loops of vagrant leaves from banks
Of purple-clustered vines clung closely to
Their stalwart limbs ; and ever denser grew
The boscage darksome. Soon the laugh died on
Each soldier's face, and from his lips was gone
The noisome jest, and something whispered low
In every heart a wordless dread, that no
Instinctive impulse could disclose at all—
A mental writing on a mental wall
Without a Daniel to expound the doubt.
A moment more—the mystery was out !
A flash like unleashed lightning loosed to play,
A roar like thunders meeting in affray,
A whoop compounded of a thousand screams,
The life-tide, gushing out in crimson streams
From British bosoms, read the riddle red
Unto the living, tangled with the dead.
It seemed as if the very bush belched fire,
As if the hand of Nature raised in ire
Had summoned rock and river, power on power,
And each had armed for the eventful hour
To drive the invaders from her own domain.
On every side the soldiers sought in vain
To find a foe. The dreaded foeman, Death,
Was manifest alone, and by his breath
Swept carnage through the leafy colonnades,
And spread in writhing swaths throughout the glades
The fated ranks. The meteor flag was torn
In shreds, and trailing in the dust was borne

A vanquished, tattered thing, that erst had spread
Its haughty folds victorious o'er the dead.

IV.

Close-sheltered 'neath a sumach-thicket lay
A soldier wounded in the fatal fray.
The friendly fern leaves folded o'er his form,—
A dainty armor 'gainst so dire a storm,—
Had warded off the spear-like glances fierce
That the death-darkened thickets strove to pierce,
With more effective skill than coat of mail.
The dying moans from lips' cold portals pale
Like dirges chanted o'er his living tomb,
Or omen-voices, ominous of doom,
From every side beat on each anguished ear,
And mummified his courage into fear.
'Tis easy to be brave when bugles blare
Triumphant martial music on the air,
While long-drawn columns curve, and wheel, and swing
Machine-like motions to their rhythmic ring,
And multitudes in holiday attire
Applaud the fervor of their mimic fire ;
But when upon a stricken field alone,
Where Torture from its serpent-hissing throne
Sways with its fleshless right arm, crimson-garbed,
A poly-pointed sceptre, poison-barbed,
And drains with cup-like suction life and soul,
Its slave, the were-wolf, Terror, wields control
O'er every impulse of the weakened brain,
And heroes into puny cravens wane.

With haggard, blood-shot eyes he gazed between
The leaf-clumps tender of his bracken screen.
Before him crept a narrow, bristling glen
Down to a water-saturated fen,
That like a giant lay beneath the trees,
From sun and wind protected, at its ease
Upon a clammy bed of mire and reeds,
Luxuriant couch befitting to its meeds.
Within its bower of bliss it seemed to rest
With undisturbed contentment in its breast.
Not so the glen, which, like a thief dismayed,
Crouched down from sight, its rugged belt arrayed
With weapons threat'ning, and its coward face
Begirt with rocky frowns, in fierce grimace
Begot of puny heart. Right well it might,
For underneath its cloak the woeful sight
Of dead and dying showed its cause for fright.
Yet after all the glen was not to blame,
But creatures fashioned after God's own frame,
Who rob the lives of mortals like themselves,
Proclaim it war, and heap the musty shelves
Of history with urns inscribed to fame,
Which opened show incinerated shame.
"Ah, hark! The tramp of feet in steady tread
Shakes like a breeze each fragile, ferny head.
Across the ridge on winding trail they move
With careful footsteps 'long a beaten groove,
Where Indian limbs and treading feet have worn
Their passage through unto the battle's bourn."

A well-accounted troop of Frenchmen proud.
Fine-feathered game-cocks, crowing very loud
O'er conflicts won, small heed they paid to cries
That tongued by wounded English might arise
From ridge or glen, or undergrowth's recess.
"A Christian foe will heed a foe's distress,"
He said, and struggled to his feet but fell.
The while with feeble voice he tried to swell
A vocal signal for relief. 'Twas vain.
Unheeded or unheard by all the train,
He saw the cavalcade sweep on its course,
And blank despair benumbed with blighting force
The throbbing of his giddy, aching brain
As down he sank upon the ground again.
Although unnoted by the passing troop,
A skulking Indian, peering through a loop
Of festooned creepers with a greedy glare,
Like that of famished catamount from lair
By hunger haunted, saw him rise and fall,
And heard the pathos of his plaintive call,
His last hope's last expiring struggle weak.
A grim smile wrinkled up each painted cheek,
A smile that seemed a bitter frown misplaced,
And gliding up in stealthy, eager haste,
He swung his tomahawk above the prey
With fiendish fervor in his fiendish play.

V.

"They're gone," the prostrate soldier murmur'd low,
"And from my stiff'ning wound I feel the flow
Renewed, that soon will end this troubled pain.
My father—mother—would that I again
Could see your faces loved, your voices hear!
'Tis vain the wish. I know that death is near.
The dreaded phantom's pallid, mystic pall
Will soon enwrap my spirit in its thrall,
And nevermore—O God—protect—amen!"
A painted face, a weapon's flash, and then
On flapping wings of fire he seemed to sink
With lightning-swiftness to the inky brink
Of a weird lake of blackness, from which rose
Long, livid goblin fingers to enclose
Him in their grasp. "Can I be dead?" he thought.
The fingers caught him, pulled him down. He fought
With frenzy to evade their clammy hold,
When all at once a blood-red curtain rolled
Before his mental vision, fold on fold:
Alternate dark and light with dazzling speed
Illumed with letters, which he could not read.
And thus it seemed to him that ages died,
That eons floated down the river wide
To vague eternity's unbounded brim,
Till time's proud ship was wrecked among the dim,
Cloud islands of futurity, that blent
With nature's dying twilight color-spent.

A sun-burst flashed athwart his buzzing brain,
And living, lo ! he found himself again,
And lying too upon the self-same sward,
Where he had swiftly closed his eyes to ward
From sight the flashing weapon's downward stroke,
That threatened to divide the earthly yoke
Which weds the soul immortal to the clay,
That mortal drags it through the stony way
Of life, until its rugged flaws are ground
By friction out, and, polished smooth and round,
It passes through the Master's hand a gem,
In fitting contour for His diadem,
Or proves at heart a flawed, imperfect thing
Unfit the service of the Heavenly King.
"What, Vane, this you ?" he asked in much surprise
On seeing o'er him bend with anxious eyes
A valued comrade.

"Hist !" the other said,
"Speak low, there's danger near. I thought you dead.
I saw him glide with serpent-motion sly,
And caught the glitter of his savage eye,
As squirming through the woods he wormed his way,
Intent upon the deep desire to slay
With stealthy blow the foeman of his race.
I reached him, but with barely time to place
My weapon 'twixt his tomahawk and you,
And warded off the blow, that, strong and true,
Was aimed with vengeance at your fated head.
One moment later and your soul had sped,

Divorced from life, unto the spirit world.
The red and yellow painted imp I hurled
Aside and soon—but why describe the scene?
He'll never fish or hunt again, I ween;
His squaw will wait in vain her brave's return;
No more his nimble feet the sod will spurn,
While on the chase behind the agile deer;
No more his whoop will send a thrill of fear
Through tortured victims death-bound to the stake.
Asleep he is—I trust his soul may wake
In some fire-haunted cavernous abode
To torture worse than ever he bestowed.
His hatchet's handle, slipping from its hold,
Against your head with force sufficient rolled
To stupefy your senses, stretch you out
Almost a corpse, and rack my heart with doubt
Of your recovery. To yonder copse
I drew his breathless form. The surface drops
Into a hollow, narrow like a grave,
O'er which the tangled wild-flowers droop, and wave
A burial web above his wounded brow.
How came I here? Well, Lee, I fain must vow
I hardly know. A blow from something sent
My senses flying like the seed-down rent
From sere bud by the bitter autumn blast,
And like a bit of driftwood I was cast
By battle's billows on a beach of leaves
Within a harbor, leafage-arched, with eaves
Of flower-knots, red and gold,—a paradise,
God-woven, fringing fair a field of vice,

Blood-painted by the master-hand of war.
I lay within this balmy corridor
Until my brain had ceased its top-like whirl,
Then staggered up in time to see the twirl
Of weapon o'er your scalp—but, hush, they come
Awhile we must be motionless and dumb.”
In most precarious plight indeed were they,
As flocking up like greedy wolves at play
From pine-dark glens, or antique bronzes roused
To life by scent of blood, the braves caroused
Through flowery meads, prismatic-massed and sweet,
Whose breasts of beauty wooed the summer's heat.
Then screeching howls arose for vengeance dire,
And grouping up in half-distracted ire
They danced a hideous war dance, round and round
The narrow cavity, in which they'd found
Their chieftain branded by the seal of Death.
The fury slowly died, and sorrow's breath
Replaced its fervor with a saddened song,
Then off the warriors went and bore along
The type of man's mortality and sin
To gruesome shades the deeper depths within.

VI.

“I fancy I can catch far bugle-calls—
Reverberations, p'raps, down Memory's halls—
For when I ask my ears, they answer 'No,'
Yet still instinctively I feel the low
Soft thrill of something brushing thoughts of home
Across my heart. Not very far I'll roam

Nor long, but up the slope I fain must pass.
I'll burrow wormlike through the ferns and grass,
And bring a message to you from the world
Beyond the straitened ken of leafage curled
Around us like a maiden's tresses o'er
Her brow. Take heed? Ah, yes, I'll hug the floor
Of mossy mould or tawny sand with love
Begot of fear, nor lift my head above
My shield of leaves, but with true coward-heart
Try to avoid at any cost the smart
Of Indian spear or point of Indian knife.
The only treasure owned by man is life;
It well beseems him to protect his own."
With noiseless laugh he went, and left alone
The wounded man, before whose eyes the sprays
Of weed and flower still fluttered in a haze
Of floating motes, that flocked before his gaze
Like pigeon-swarms upon a cloudless sky.
"Tis said that man has only once to die,"
He mused, "that brave men welcome death's approach.
Alas, that cowardice must needs encroach
Upon my hour of trial, for fearing death
A man cannot be brave. I fear the breath
That freezes heart and soul asunder more
While lying here than when the battle's roar
Was tingling rampant music through my veins.
Perhaps with loss of blood the spirit drains
Away— Oh, fear, avaunt, I'll shut my eyes
While fate, or good or ill, seeks out its prize."

VII.

With movements moulded in true woodman's way
Vane took advantage of each bush and spray
Until he knelt behind a fallen tree,
And through its fork a wide expanse could see
Of Heaven's blue tides melt into purple peaks
Of mountain majesty, distrained by streaks
Of unfledged clouds, upshot by purple waves
As if to seize their plumes. Great architraves
Of forest-green shone on the nearer hills,
That firmly grounded on vast granite sills
Defied the lake, which laved their massive feet.
Out on the water plainly in retreat
He saw a line of vessels far away,
And o'er the green-blue waves the red display
Of British uniforms, like distant flowers
Of peace on crystal beds, instead of powers
Of war, defeated, smarting 'neath the scourge.
Below him sloping to the water's verge
The ground was yellow-sodden, stone-beflecked,
And sprawling shrubs and ugly weeds bedecked
Its surface, till, like noble face o'ergrown
With unkempt beard, its struggling beauty shone
With difficulty through its rugged mask.
Upon the scanty sward, as lean dogs bask
In sunshine, lay the forms of braves ablaze
With divers uncouth colors, while the haze,

Of smoke-rift o'er them, from the tiny flues
Of many pipes combined, tried to infuse
The balmy air with its aroma strange;
So well succeeding that it reached the range
Of Vane's olfactory nerves in transient waves.
He saw the squaws, the lordly redmen's slaves,
Glide to and fro on menial errands bound,
While naked children, diving from a mound,
Bobbed back and forth within the bubbling tides,
Or scrambling out shook from their shining hides
The dripping water like young water-dogs,
Then chased each other over stones and logs
With peals of high-voiced mirth. He moved again
And then beheld, within an angle of the plain
That edged between the forest and the stream,
A long white town of tents with bayonet-gleam
And sword-flash darting from a thousand spires
Of burnished steel, rare flints to strike the fires
Of war. A breaking twig, a tramping sound
Bade him in haste gaze hurriedly around.
Upon a piebald horse, bone-angled, lean,
And lame, an Indian with a haughty mien
Rode slowly up to near and perfect view.
A fiery youth, bedaubed with red and blue,
Almost arrayed in nature's garb was he,
But from his belt there hung below his knee
A string of scalps yet dripping fresh with gore.
His head-dress, feather-bristling, fluttered o'er
His brawny shoulders, and his eyes betrayed
The thirst for blood, that blood had not allayed.

He bounded from the sorry steed and said,
While tossing back the reins above its head,
“Go, useless brute, I have no need for you.
Though poor I thought you’d do to carry through
The forest one I vowed to make my prize—
Ere now I hoped to kiss her lips and eyes
In love’s fond ecstasy, but every scheme
I conjure up is empty as a dream.”
The hobbling animal browsed slowly back
Along the winding woodland-tangled track.
The supple savage tossed his frame upon
The grass, lithe as a serpent, and spake on :
“I’ll ne’er forgive those useless British knaves !
Had they but fought like men, and not like slaves,
The Frenchman’s hands and ears would have been won,
And I my goodly work could well have done ;
But as it was no chance was given me.
Ah, well, no game that’s lightly won wins glee.
The prize will be the better when it’s snared !
If British bombast only could have dared— ”
With rubber-like agility he rose :
“I hate with concentrated hate such foes !
In every way I can I’ll do them ill.”
He bounded lightly down the slanting hill
Unto the lounging groups upon the shore.
Vane’s vision hunted for the boats once more,
And barely found them on its outer bound.
“I’ll back to Lee. There’s nothing hovers round
Us here but death or torture. P’raps the night
By bringing darkness may dispense us light.”

VIII.

The sombre curtains of the eventide
Closed o'er the legion-haunted forest wide,
And hid beneath their garb of murky hue
The vari-colored battlefield from view.
The cloisters of the bush gave to the breeze
The songs of wildwood sirens 'mong the trees,
Which bore them off until they softly blent
With wave-chords from the lake's intoned lament,
That landward floated when the stars' bright eyes
Peeped through the twilight of the sunset skies.
Their mingled music with a dirge-like strain—
An old-time song with sorrowful refrain
Into the solitude abysmal sent,
The joy-notes from its spectre-bosom rent,—
A plaintive cadence dying, ne'er to die,
That floated up on cloud-wings to the sky,
And touched the harp-strings of the endless years—
The quota added to the chorused tears
That round the crumbling ages wail the ban,
Doom-centred on the sinful soul of man.
In pain and anguish Lee, our hero, lay
As blackness brooded o'er the death of day.
His friend had bound his wound with careful skill,
But pain-throbs keen sent piercing, thrill on thrill,
A lancinating torture through his nerves,
And often too in queer, eccentric curves

His fancies roamed from reason's beaten road,
And fiery lashes from the stinging goad
Of thirst at times despite his will drew sighs
From lips by fever parched, and tears from eyes
That had not flinched in danger's direst hour,
The windows of a brain that did not cower
Before the perils of the ambuscade,
When guiding manfully a soldier's blade.

IX.

Into the gloom intense Vane tried to spy
With ear alert and eager, searching eye.
Aloft the crooning of the cloud-like pines;
Around the murmur, that the ear defines
As myriad-throated, world-throbs, large and small,
From busy worldlets on each leaf and ball
Of tufted verdure, were the only sounds
That night gave out. Not yet the sentry-rounds
Of watchful wolf and wild-cat had begun.
"I think," said he, "the savage feast is done.
His hunger sated, back within his tent
Each doughty brave, in ecstasy content,
Dreams o'er a drowsy pipe a dream baptized
With blood, and strokes the precious trophies prized
By him as marks of favor and renown.
Into the darkness I will hasten down
Through yon defile, thence o'er that sedgy brake
Until I reach the margin of the lake.
I'll soon return and clear, cold water bring
From that delightful limpid, sparkling spring

Where we this morning quenched our fervid thirst
Before began that fatal fight accursed.
I cannot say, perchance a rambling brave,
Like jackal round an oriental grave,
May bark a ringing summons to his mate,
Proclaiming some poor wounded soldier's fate.
Should such an echo greet your waiting ear
Pray heed it not. I think no cause for fear
For me need trouble you when I am gone.
Keep still. Good-bye. I'll straightway hurry on."
A tall, lithe youth, ambitious, honest, true,
A soldier fitted, he, to carry through
The vale of danger up to glory's mount,
All drenched and dripping fresh from battle's fount,
The flag of Britain, emblem of the free,
The meteor talisman of liberty.
In savage frontier strife with crafty foe
Each woodland stratagem he well did know,
And lurcher-like could trace a trail with ease
Through the dim forest's fragrant mysteries.
Though born and bred in Boston, skilled was he
To shoot a deer or fell a mighty tree
With equal art to those who'd always been
Within the precincts of the bosky green ;
And in the pompous, stiff, and stately ways
Of formal-fashioned old colonial days
Could with a lofty, ultra-gracious air
Act well the beau to haughty lady fair.

X.

Through briered dells by trail-weeds clogged he crept,
Cloak-wrapped by night's obscurest garb, and kept
Each faculty agog, each nerve-chord tense.
He slowly cleft the gruesome, chilling, dense
Black mystery, and down tenebrious ways
With footsteps stealthy and with anxious gaze
Moved slowly on anear his bubbling goal,
A runnel, leaf-clogged, save its sparkling roll
From rock-ribbed mouth into the pulsing lake.
Upon the border of a tangled brake
Awhile he paused, peered cautiously about,
His fancies twirling in a whirl of doubt ;
But soon the gently-gurgling, drowsy sound
Of water rippling o'er the rocky ground
Flew to his aid, a very welcome guide,
And crouching o'er the tiny brooklet's side
Bent eagerly with heated lips to drink
The cooling current from its mossy brink.
Right happily indeed, I well may ween,
He filled to very brim his small canteen,
And softly turned away with anxious care
To bear the precious water bushward, where
His friend, whose throat with fiery thirst did burn,
Was praying fervently for his return.
Then reached his ears a distant splashing sound
That made him swerve in quick alarm around,

And snuff the lake-breeze like a startled deer.
“Again the sound—again—’tis coming near!
An Indian shallop, doubtless, paddle-spced,
It shoots its course around yon beachy head.
This dwarf spruce-belt will shelter o’er me cast
Until the nearing danger shall have passed.”
He heard the keel scrape on the pebbly sand,
And rather felt than saw dim shadows land,
And heard them drag the boat upon the beach
Beyond the restless water’s rippling reach.
His first impulse was foolish headlong flight;
But shaking off the ague-thrill of fright—
The chill presaging courage-fever hot—
He stood as rooted to the risky spot,
With every nerve to highest tension keyed
For crafty caution or for daring deed.
Low-voiced and deep, in hasty gutt’ral tones,—
Attuned to prisoned wind-chords’ plaintive moans
From castled-keep of distant pine-dark glen,—
The leader gave his orders to his men,
Commanding them to follow after him
In silence ’neath the maple-arches dim.
They passed—so close indeed they passed him by,
That had he rashly raised his hand on high
He might have touched each tattoo-painted limb
Of those ferocious man-hounds, gaunt and grim.

XI.

Like wand'ring wraiths with phantom-softness shod
Their footfalls waked no echoes from the sod.
As scudding wind-clouds sweep the midnight sky
The dream-like shadows flitted swiftly by,
And superstition's wand with potent thrill
Smote on the bulwarks of the soldier's will,
And sought to quake the ramparts mortal-proof
With weapon woven with immortal woof.
The hollow moaning of the tristful breeze
Throughout the vast expanse of night-craped trees—
The sullen sobbing of the unseen lake—
The frogs' low croaking in the swampy brake—
The knowledge of the stricken ones around
Sleeping the endless sleep of death profound,
All helped to conjure up a ghastly spell
Which, spite his efforts, on his senses fell
As falls a fog athwart a sunny bay :
A thought-wind's rush and it was swept away,
As busy zephyrs brush the curtain dun,
And clear betwixt the water and the sun
The faint penumbra of the brief eclipse.
"Am I a child," came quickly to his lips,
"To let a string of shadows slave my sense
With flimsy cob-web bonds? Bah! Hasten hence
Such thoughts! Better for us indeed were they
The grisly phantoms of a former day,

Uprisen from some ancient charnel-mound
To prow! about the recent battle-ground,
Recalling victories won while in the flesh,
And fighting all their conquests o'er afresh,
Than brawn, and bone, and blood of living mould—
Naught need I fear from fleeting phantoms cold!
The living only need I watch in dread—
All harmless are the armies of the dead.
I'll pluck the fruit from fate's inviting bough,
Steal yon canoe and point its slender prow
Around the bushy headland to the hill
That points its inky apex, black and still,
Toward the stars, a monument of gloom,
Like fate draped in the murky robe of doom.
Aside the looming column's storm-swept feet,
Where lake and land-breeze blend their pinions fleet,
A clump of bushes bends its verdant crown
With pendent plumes in sweeping beauty down
Unto the wimpling wavelet's kissing touch.
In safety there from prowling savage clutch
I'll hide my pilfered prize, and fleetly speed
To where my comrade lies in urgent need
Of help my awkward fingers cannot give.
Left there he dies—I vow that he shall live
If aid of mine will guarantee his life."
The branches clogged his way in silent strife,
As slowly from their clinging arms he merged,
And on the water's plashing margin verged.
Not one but three canoes upon the sand
Felt on their barken sides his searching hand,

As o'er their gummy seams it swiftly sped.
The lightest launching, toward the bosky head
He steered, and drew with long and noiseless sweep
The paddle till he reached its wooded steep.
Then gliding gently 'mid the rushes rank
He bounded lightly to the spongy bank,
And housed within a leaf-enwoven nest
The water wild-bird with its birchen breast,
That palpitated softly with a sob
In measure with the lake-heart's muffled throb.
With hunter-instinct true to guide his way
He hastened back to where in anguish lay
His mate, whose fevered fancies quick to wing
Had circled swiftly round the lakeside spring,
Where darkness-hooded deeds in huddled throng
Waved their wild arms in pantomimic song.

XII.

As on he softly went he heard no sound
Of prowling redmen in the wilds around ;
Nor to his eyes came sight of any sign
By which he could their silent course divine.
True, oft he started back in sudden dread,
And bowed with instant haste his active head,
But ever ascertained, on looking near,
That what had made him hesitate in fear
Was only bank, or bush, or deeper shade,
By light-contrasting, open leafage made.
In safety soon he reached the ferny spot,
Where, chafing grimly o'er his hapless lot,

The wounded captain feared his daring friend
Had crossed the bourn to which all mortals trend,
A victim to the fancied orgies wild
The fount's unblemished bosom had defiled.
Right gladly, therefore, did he greet him when
He crept down closely by his side again.
"I feared," he said, "you'd met a skulking foe,
And fallen 'neath a coward's sneaking blow."
"I really met a file of foes indeed,
But took good care and crafty, cautious heed
That I should keep myself by them unseen ;
And providential 'tis for us, I ween,
That I by chance was standing close at hand
When the marauding villains came to land.
For I from them stole off a light canoe,
All heedless of their vested rights, and drew
It through a labyrinth of reeds until
I hid it at the base of yonder hill.
The green leaf-curtains, midnight-tinted now,
Fold o'er its slender length from stern to prow,
And in its secret nook 'twill nestle safe,
Though long-limbed redmen hunt the missing waif
Till day-dawn bathes the dusky face of night.
But we must move ere comes the morning light
With sharp-eyed glances peering 'neath the eaves
Of temples moulded out of maple leaves.
I fear me much 'twill hurt your wound to go,
But 'tis indeed our only hope, I know.
This canteen's contents will, I trust, refresh
Your drooping strength. We must evade the mesh

Of weaving dangers netting us around.
Up gently, now ! I'll aid you from the ground :
Old England ill can spare your nerve and skill.
The meteor flag shall flap above you still
In triumph to atone to-day's mistake.
The night will pass, the day of victory break !
The gloom is dowered with doubtful safety but
The dawn with death. The sharp canoe may cut
Our pathway now athwart the dimpling deep.
The curling mists that veil the morn will sweep
The sails of death's pale craft across our trail ;
We won't give up ! Life's jewel-sparkling grail
A luring lustre throws of liquid light
Adown our path. With wings of hope bedight
We'll soar o'er puny things. Lean on my arm.
With eyes and ears alert for each alarm
We'll push along our safety-seeking road."
With difficulty struggling 'neath a load
Of fiery pain-darts, soon he could not stand
Without his stalwart partner's aiding hand.
That partner then, most tenderly and true,
Did for him all a soldier's will could do ;
But fain were both to rest a space ere they
Had ventured far upon their dusky way.
" 'Tis all in vain ! " gasped Lee. " I cannot go
Another rod. Each movement sends a throe
Of torture through my miserable frame,
That goads my spirit to subjection tame.
Go ! Leave me ! Here you risk your useful life
In noble, earnest, unavailing strife

To bear my war-wrecked figure from the field.
Ere day the forest's secrets have revealed
You can no doubt without me safely go
Across the hidden waves"—"Hist, there's the foe!
I'll help you back beyond this spruce-set hill,
Where we will ambuscade awhile until
We learn what yonder noisy knaves are at.
Owl-eyed, or visual-featured like a bat,
One needs must be to read the inky page
Which bears the impress of their noisy rage."

XIII.

As flashes up an ember's fluttering fire,
That erst had seemed just ready to expire,
When fanning breeze upon it sharply blows,
So then Lee's drooping spirits quickly rose,
As on a sudden with a ruddy glow
A smoking pine-torch in the swale below
Swung rapidly before his startled sight,
Transforming sombre shades of lonely night
To human shapes of ghastly warrior-guise.
A moment, stimulated by surprise,
His wonted strength returned and he could stand,
Unaided, staring at the savage band,
And hardly needed any help to creep
The path to covert, thorny, rough, and steep.
"That wriggling dance no doubt is o'er their dead.
The more they dance the better," Harold said.
"May nature's heart, infuriated by
Their revels, spur them on until they vie

Each other in gore-glutting carnival,
And like to wolves, flesh-maddened, burst the thrall
That prisons up their own fierce heathen souls,
Which, when their blood dyes red the brown pine boles,
Will float upon the wind in ebbing sobs,
Responsive to their bosoms' dying throbs.
Let's through this clump of trees. Come, ere you feel
Those faint sensations o'er your body steal.
Our way we'll take again toward the lake ;
We must embark before the morn's awake."
In vain the attempt to try to urge him on :
Again unnerved, his transient strength was gone.
"Leave, I command you," feebly faltered he,
"You shall not sacrifice your life for me.
Full well I know I cannot 'scape the foe,
So I beseech you instantly to go.
There's one, I ween, in yonder seaport town,
With bonny flaxen hair and eyes of brown,
Whose gentle head will droop with blighting woe
If you are killed, so Harold, comrade, go !"
"I'm not in danger's fingers—do not fret—
I'll tow you off in triumph's shallop yet ;
But as for going, trust me I will not
Desert you in your present luckless lot.
No friends of mine, however they might grieve
O'er my decease, would ever bid me leave
A wounded friend in solitude to die.
I will not go without you. Do not try
To coax me on so cowardly a course—"
Then interrupted loudly their discourse

A sudden tumult, many voiced and strong,
That soared and swelled and sank in funeral song
Until the trumpets of the distant hills
Caught up the music, and, with minor trills,
Repeated far across the lake's lone breast
A wail of woe for warriors at rest.

XIV.

The high, frenetic chorus waned anon,
And presently one voice alone went on
In chanting strain sonorous to describe
The virtues of the sachem of his tribe,
Around whose frigid clay inanimate
The snaky circle swerved with signs of hate
Against the fatal hand that laid him low.
As Harold did their uncouth language know,
He listened with most efficacious care
To catch each sentiment as uttered there.

The Indian's Requiem.

Cold and still our chieftain's lying
'Mid the mingled dead and dying,
While his soldiers o'er him sighing
Mourn the brave one gone forever.
Nevermore o'er field or river
Will he lead us into battle,
Where the firearms flash and rattle.
Nevermore his clear voice ringing,
Martial music proudly singing,

Will re-echo far before us,
Or his strong right arm wave o'er us,
As he charges on the foe.
See afar the vivid lightning
All the dim horizon bright'ning,
'Tis the mighty Manito,
Who is guiding o'er morasses,
And through gloomy mountain passes
Up beyond the cloudy masses,
Now his spirit brave on high
To the hunting-grounds of glory,
Told of in traditions hoary,
Sung in song and famed in story,
To the land beyond the sky.
He has gained, but we have lost him—
Curse the day the foemen crossed him!—
Sage in council, fierce in fighting,
He is dead, the vict'ry blighting,
Who in earnest strived for righting
Wrongs, that, e'en our bravest frightening,
Weigh us down on every hand.
By the shining stars above us,
Let us rouse for those who love us,
Grasp with firmer clutch the brand!
Wave it high until the glaring
Of the flaming housetops, flaring,
Casts a ghastly glitter far,
And unto the heavens sending
Gleams that with the lightning blending,
Play around the evening star,
Showing him his memory's living,
Strength and courage to us giving
To continue in our working,
Ever striving, planning, lurking
Round the hated faces pale

To exterminate the scourges.
Everything around us urges
On, as thus we chant our dirges,
That for vengeance we assail,
Without mercy, without warning,
Every cry for pity scorning,
Till there's none to tell the tale ;
Till the white face will have vanished,
By the redman's weapon banished
From each mountain, plain, and vale.
Now in anguish and in grieving
Take we our last mournful leaving,
Bid to thee a sad farewell.
O'er thy body, calmly sleeping,
May the tears of night-dews, weeping,
Turn to flowers sweetly creeping,
Till in gorgeous radiance heaping
Fill they all this mournful dell.

XV.

Then died the chant in soft and plaintive way,
As dies the echoes o'er the marshes gray,
And on the last, low, hesitating tone,
Sad as a lone pine's solitary moan,
Rose with a shout the chorus once again.
A roll of thunder took up the refrain,
And pealed it through the pathways of the sky
Unto the threshold of the cloud-throne high,
Where robed in misty garments intertwined
The potent watchers of the mighty wind
Held at the Master's hest the circling strings,
That stayed the pulsing of its ponderous wings.

Again the chorus waned into a wail
By silence slain, and from the solemn vale,
Low-bent beneath the burden of their woe,
And breathing vows of vengeance on their foe,
They vanished as the day into the night.
Afraid to move, though safety lay in flight,
The anxious white men, eyes and ears alert
For roving dangers, which they might avert,
As beasts at bay crouch down in savage mood
To shun the forest-tyrants searching food,
Low grovelled 'mong the leaves and scaly cones.
Lee's teeth were clinched to cage the struggling groans
That pain-betortured dashed against the bars
And scintillated into fiery stars,
That meteoric o'er his vision shot.
At last he said, "Oh, leave me! 'Tis my lot
To perish here. I can no longer quell
My voice—"

"Ah, what? Another funeral yell!"
His comrade interrupted. "So they've found
Fresh cause for howling. Would the miry ground
Would drag them down into its boggy bed,
And huge reeds fatten, on their corpses fed!
They're far enough away. The coast is clear.
The chance has come to move away from here."
'Twere painful to describe Lee's luckless plight,
When once again they struggled in their flight
Through sedgy slough, and slimy, weed-grown pool,
Unto the rugged capes, rock-ribbed, and cool

With oozing springlets, that like sentries stood,
The warders of the scallop-hiding wood.
"The boat is almost at our feet, but now
A danger threatens, that might quickly cow
The bravest heart. List to the booming sound
That rolls across the forest's mighty bound,
And ebbs and flows in tides of surging surf—
The sky-waves beating on the coast of earth;
And note the lightning's scythe cut swaths of light
Across the meadows of the moonless night.
Beneath the rocks 'twere better we should wait
Than trust our fortune to the pilot Fate,
A luckless guide upon a stormy lake,
With death to fore and danger in his wake.
A cave nests in the cliff across the cove—
The path there's guarded by a willow grove.
An effort more and then in havened rest
We'll wait the coming of the threatened guest,
Which knocks upon the portals of the night
With emphasis suggestive of its might."
Thus Harold spake, and Lee again essayed
To struggle onward with his comrade's aid,
But words descriptive cannot paint the pain,
That, spasm-shotted, wracked his frame again.
The blotted landscape, steeped in deepest dye,
Glowed out at times, as if the gates on high
With outward swing gave glimpses of the Throne,
And in the startling outbursts, fleetly shown
Athwart their way, unearthly radiance shed
That smote their bosoms with the creeping dread

Of ghostly spirits, and of yawning graves,
That oft the most intrepid soul enslaves.
Fancy them groping onward in the night
'Mid dead and dying, stricken in the fight,
And instantly the gloom displaced by bright
And furnace-glowing flashes, showing white
Up-staring faces, mixed of friends and foes,
In clustered heaps or long, inwoven rows.
Each glimpse that glowed was fleeter far than thought,
But slow enough to show that it was fraught
With shades of horror far beyond the scope
Of pen's or pencil's utmost power to cope.
Then hushed the breathing of the panting trees,
As ceased the gasping of the fitful breeze,
And calm presaging settled over lake
And land. Nor leaf did stir, nor wave did break,
As if awed nature's bosom ceased its swell
When pealed the chiming of the storm-king's bell
From Heaven's high arch to earth's mosaic floor,
And echoed back and forth in wild encore.
"Ah, here's the spot we're looking for," at length
Said Harold. "Glad am I your ebbing strength
Held out. Rest now upon this stony bed,
With rocky pillow 'neath your aching head,
While I speed back with all the haste I may
To lift our bark beyond the billows' play,
And hide it from the buffets of the gale,
That soon will harp-like sweep o'er lake and vale
Its airy fingers in a wild refrain,
The prelude of the coming of the rain."

The squally skirmishers, which led the van,
Smote him with vigor as he blindly ran
Back to the cavern when his task was o'er.
Then burst the tempest with a deaf'ning roar
O'er mount and moor, o'er forest, lake and stream,
While glowed the lightning in incessant gleam,
And thunder fought with thunder in the din,
As trees dashed down and frightened waves rushed in.
Great trees, that soared with lofty heads on high
The while the storms of ages passed them by,
And nodded gleefully unto each blast,
Uprooted lay when the tornado passed.
The waters turbulent had ne'er before
Lashed out so fiercely 'gainst the raging shore ;
For, boiling madly in that awful hour,
They rivalled e'en the ocean's mighty power,
When, winter-rode, it shakes its angry mane,
And heaps in mountains its aforesaid plain.
Each long wave seemed veneered with liquid fire,
Whence blue tongues lapped the lone coast's lurid pyre.
A scene too glaring 'twas for mortal sight,
And so they hooded from the dazzling light
Their aching eyes, and crouched behind the rocks
That harbored them against the gusty shocks
Of warring winds, right well content that they
'Neath stony bulwarks could defy the sway
Of powers invincible on open field,
Before which land and water had to yield.
Then poured the rain in evanescent shower.
The wind-bursts lost their tyranny of power,

The lightning dimmed, and soon the thunder's sound
Came low across the lake's remotest bound,
And just as dawning heralded the day,
And tinted up the hill-tops far away
With faint reminders of the coming sun,
Pale, filmy letters on a standard dun,
The storm-cloud's sombre vesture disappeared,
The wind had settled and the weather cleared.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

THE cold, gray morning struggled through the mist
That, curling slowly upward, coyly kissed
The low clouds, bending down to its embrace.
The white-maned waves, in merry, giddy race,
Sped to their fog-lined goal, the sombre strand,
And died in silvery circlets on the sand,
Or broke in futile wrath upon the rocks,
And dashed in spray upon the snaky locks
Of unshorn grasses, round whose marshy feet
The stagnant lilies dozed with stolid beat.
Fatigued and hungry, comfortless and cold,
Though yet undaunted, vigorous and bold,
When ceased the mammoth storm-burst, Harold rose
And warily gazed out for sign of foes.
Then 'mong the clammy lichened rocks he crept,
Whence countless tiny streamlets oozing, wept
By myriad stony eyes as if in woe,
Made tortuous his watchful motions slow.
He gave round rugged coigne a landward gaze,
That giddy grew with deep draughts of amaze.

Destruction reigned in grandeur all around ;
With broken trees was paved the wind-swept ground.
Quick craning out his neck for better sight,
His caution winging off in sudden flight,
He saw throughout the woods the clear-cut path
The cyclone carved with preternatural wrath,
For winding far, unto his vision plain,
The prone trees grovelled in an open lane,
Where he'd beheld them but on yestere'en
Proud forest monarchs waving sceptres green.
Though ruffled yet, the lake's full heaving breast
Was flutt'ring waywardly adown to rest,
With now and then a palpitating roll
As if the heart beneath could not control
As yet its movements, startled by the storm,
But, like to frightened babe, with sob-wracked form
Was slowly verging on the shores of sleep.
Pine, spruce, and cedar boughs, in many a heap
Together lashed by interlinking limbs,
Formed drifting rafts with water-dripping rims,
Which clogged the water's blue with sodden green.
Long, bobbing logs swung here and there between,
And Harold's fancies presently descried,
Anear a little rock-mailed islet's side,
An Iroquois canoe, upturned and torn,
Now here, now there, by aimless billows borne.
"It may be but a half-drowned snag," mused he,
"Or gray-barked trunk of broken, wind-launched tree,
But still methinks they must have found a grave
Within the bosom of the bounding wave

If they embarked upon the wind-lashed lake
About the time the tempest 'gan to break.
It seems to me above the booming swell
Of deaf'ning sound I heard a high-pitched yell
Of anguish, keen as though a tortured soul
Was scourged with torments till it lost control
Of life's slim reins the while the courser sped
Along the giddy marge anear the dead.
It must have been the frantic, dying scream
Of one who perished in the seething stream.
Alas, poor wretch!—But why, indeed, should I
For him or them so much as waste a sigh?
If they are lost our water-course is clear;
We may embark with scant concern or fear.
Poor Lee is hardly able now to stir,
And will not move, I'm sure, without demur.
His clothes are wet. Alternate heat and chill
Possess his frame. I greatly fear he will
Succumb ere I can get him proper care;
But I'll not sit down meekly in despair.
Come, Harry, come! It's time for action! Wake!
Let's up and off to refuge 'cross the lake!
You can recline full length in the canoe
The while I pull the friendly waters through."
"Oh, Harold, leave me—leave me! Well I know
I cannot stir. Indeed, I cannot go!
But yet it grieves me more to think that you
Are staying here in mutual danger too.
I will not—cannot move—here will I die!
Ah, surely, Harold, you will not deny

Fulfilment to my dying wish and leave
For those you love, for those whose hearts will grieve
With dolor deep as human breast can know,
If you are murdered by the dusky foe.
Here as I lie I'll watch your fleet-winged boat
Across the undulating shadows float,
And when you vanish from my earnest gaze
I'll feebly raise my voice in thankful praise
To God for having thus protected you,
A soldier staunch and brave, a hero true."
"A soldier I, alas, not very brave—
No hero I, yet not, I trust, a slave
To fears disgraceful or to craven greed—
I'll not desert you in your urgent need.
No, though our lives hang by a brittle thread,
We'll shoulder each the other till we're dead."
With gentle touch and tender, watchful care
Down the embankment did he slowly bear
The heavy, helpless, pallid, wounded man,
And by ingenious, firmly-handed plan
Placed him within the reeling, frail canoe,
And skimmed out o'er the settling billows blue.

II.

The sun's ascending disk, half-hid, half-seen,
Threw wide and far a glory-tinted sheen,
That burnished vividly with fiery crest
The purple hill-tops wrapped in cloudland rest,
When that canoe sped on its outward way,
And bounded lightly o'er the playful spray.

Each dainty little islet, dotted round
With gauzy film of mystic mist o'er-crowned,
Seemed blushing 'neath the passion-flooded light
Of fervent Sol's bewild'ring glances bright,
As beauteous maid upon her bridal day
With modest blushes coyly turns away,
And seeks behind pellucid veil to hide
The charms her ardent lover has descried ;
But vainly seeks, for e'en despite her will
Those charms grow brighter yet and lovelier still.
Each willow-withe and shrub, with rain-drops wet,
Seemed pendant rich with nature's opals set,
And all the rocky coast-line glittered bright
With brilliants bedded in its brown and white.
The "Holy Lake," too, shone like molten ore,
A mighty jewel rimmed with rugged shore
By ancient artists—heat, and storm, and frost—
In pre-historic ages carved and bossed.
With each and all the forest keenly vied
To greet the day-king as the night-queen died.

III.

With searching eyes Harold had keenly scanned
The watery vista from the highest land
Ere he had paddled from the shelt'ring brake,
And left the friendly haven in his wake.
But naught suspicious could his glance descry,
Excepting what before he did espy,
And which he deemed was an upturned canoe,
And shortly proved he his surmises true.

"'Tis as I thought. A wreck drifts to and fro.
The men that manned it must be lying low
Among the sunken rocks in Death's white arms—
No fear from them in ambuscade's alarms.
Whoe'er would think that only yestere'en
The lake, now placid, peaceful, and serene,
Was frantic with a boisterous, frothing rage—
A mad thing foaming in its rocky cage?
Or who'd believe that yonder mist-veiled hill,
This morn so calm, so lovely, and so still,
Was yesterday afire with murderous flame
As fighting hordes together clashing came,
And that e'en now its leafy hollows hold
Grim, ghastly semblances of mortal mould,
The fruitage shaken from the tree of life
By rude gust born of internecine strife?"
While thus he spake, his paddle's steady stroke
The mirrored surface of the water broke
Into a thousand fragments, whence the rays,
Reflecting gloom and gloss, displayed a maze
Of fractured shadows, tints of reeds and rocks,
Inverted images of startled flocks
Of ducks and snipes above, and far below
From depth that seemed abysmal, fleet and slow,
The bass and pike and trout in merry sports
Up, down, around, and through the tangled courts
Of weedy vines, which water-lilies hold,
Enthroned on emerald, robed in white and gold.
A peaceful spirit seemed to rule the scene
As on he sped the sedgy isles between,

But suddenly, while passing round a curve,
He noticed that which made him sharply swerve
With hasty, quick-born impulse from his course,
And wrench the paddle through with doubled force.
A glimpse of boat well-manned had caught his eye,
And confident was he its crew could spy
His head erect, ere round the reeds that grew
About the bend he could evade their view.
His comrade felt the buoyant impulse given
As faster on the nimble bark was driven,
And knew that instant danger threatened nigh
From the ferocious flash of Harold's eye.
A sharp glance sideways told the unwelcome truth.
"We're chased by Frenchmen!" hissed in ruffled ruth
The fleet words from the paddler's tight-drawn lips.
"But by the way our vessel lightly skips
I judge they'll find no easy task ahead."
A long low isle between them, onward sped
The hunted and the hunters in hot chase.
It was indeed a spirit-stirring race!
Harold was supple, strong, and long of limb—
The exercise was but as play to him,
And manfully he dashed along the way,
While, losing nothing by the least delay,
The larger boat was likewise urged along
By arms impulsive, willing, skilled, and strong.

IV.

Alternately the racers seemed to gain
As each did every nerve and muscle strain,
And forced the pace with all a sprinter's speed.
At last his haste made him forget to heed
The rocks and shallows planted in his way,
And Harold noted with intense dismay
A chafing rent, by rocky dagger made,
A tiny opening by a dangerous blade,
Through which the bubbling water 'gan to ooze.
"Alas, we've sprung a leak ! We're bound to lose
The race. Surrender is the wiser way.
They'll surely treat us well, those Frenchmen gay."
Then with a look resigned of calm despair
He waved aloft his paddle in the air,
A token signaled that he'd ceased to try
From stronger foemen longer then to fly.
Lee saw the paddle drop, its holder fall,
Heard from behind the murd'rous Indian-call,
Commingled with a musket's rattling voice,
A combination of malignant choice ;
Knew in a flash his friend had met his death,
Told by his staring eyes and gasping breath,
Turned and beheld a very swarm of braves—
Red-painted figures crouched in reedy caves—
Red mouths agape in ghoul-beseeming gloat—
Red eyes aflame upon the white-crewed boat

That fell within their toils, as in a nest
Of famished wolves a hunger-welcome guest.
His blood burst through the slender bond that held
A shattered vessel, and the heart-impelled,
Hot, crimson tide welled from the life-spring up,
And drained unto its very dregs life's cup.
Then instantly he sank in swoon so deep
As well to simulate Death's dreaded sleep,
And thus remained with upturned face as white
As cloud the full moon shimmers through at night.
From out his frigid lips arose no sound
That could be caught by Frenchmen crowding round,
But just as each one thought that death was nigh,
His feeble breath came back with flutt'ring sigh.
The corpse-like pallor left his lip and cheek
The while he mumbled low in accents weak,
And fancied he was back at home again
Beyond the foaming, billow-tossing main,
Within the precincts of his boyhood days,
Ere forth he launched upon the world's rough ways.
Anon he charged with fancied valor high,
And heard the cannon's voice roll to the sky.
The tempest's sweep, the lightning-lighted lake
Again made his awe-stricken spirit quake ;
Once more he saw poor Harold gasp for breath,
Clasped in the clutches of the angel Death ;
And thus for days he threaded through a maze,
Created by a tireless, mastering craze.

V.

At length one night refreshing slumber came,
And sweetly soothed his fevered, nervous frame
With nature's grand elixir, potent rest,
Of mundane medicines the first and best.
So when he woke upon the break of day
Delirious clouds had vanished quite away,
And reason's sun began its march again
Just when the morning's sun began to reign ;
And like it dazzled first the looker-on,
Accustomed to the shades then happ'ly gone
As migrant birds into another clime,
Before the entry of the morning's prime,
Triumphant o'er the tyrant powers of gloom,
Symbolic of the vict'ry o'er the tomb.
He scarce could move. His voice was very weak ;
Gaunt furrows lined his wan and sunken cheek ;
Yet still he gazed about with curious eye
On all his scanty vision could descry.
The room was strange, and quite unknown to him,
The past was 'wilderer, indistinct, and dim.
He feebly wondered how he chanced, and why,
In log-walled, lofty tenement to lie,
And, wondering vaguely, slowly did recall
Back to his blotted memory one and all
The desp'rate deeds ere daring Harold's blood
Poured at his feet in crimson-painted flood.

Then came a trance dim-showing, as if seen
Through folds of blackness stretching up between
The mind and deeds, which might be fancies strange
So far they roamed beyond the beaten range
Of reason's bound, with gaps of darker shade
Between, whence thoughts swam up in garb arrayed
Of motley tint, and danced to mazy strains
Strung on the gamut of his troubled brains.
The dawning followed, indistinct and gray,
But slowly moulding into mental day.
"It seems as if I'd waked from very death,"
He thought. "I know I felt as if the breath
Of winds eternal sent a clammy chill
From awesome crypt-caves, mouldy tomb-vaults still,
Upon my heart, and fancied that I died.
The burning Indian eyes, in seeming, vied
In branding torture-marks upon my brain,
That ice-like hissed its anguish back again
Beneath the searing-hot, metallic sting.
Then slowly floating, as if borne awing
By some protecting power, I rose above
Both sight and sound, and, as a mounting dove
Escapes the toiler's almost circling snare,
I mounted up into the regions, where
Insensibility rules o'er a realm
Of mercy, and controls with despot helm
A ship of state, encargoed with relief
For mortals burdened down with pain or grief.
The Frenchmen must have interfered to save
Me on the toppling margin of the grave,

*

And I, a helpless captive, mumble here,
Like to a babe in strength, a child in fear.
Man cannot tell until he tries," he said,
"What man can do. If I can lift my head
On level with this rustic window-sill,
Of my surroundings then I trust I will
Obtain a useful view, for none too soon
Can I begin to angle for the boon
Of freedom, valuable as life itself."
He grappled at the rough-hewn window-shelf,
Caught one brief glimpse of water, wood, and sky,
Then dizzy sank with sharp, impatient cry
Recumbent as before, and fain content
Awhile to watch the circumscribed extent
Of sky, a map of azure, hung before
The open casement, over which the score
Of island-limit, ocean, hill, and plain,
'Neath cloudy fingers changed and changed again.

VI.

The tints rolled round into the even-tide.
The azure color of the sky-map died,
And in its place night's dusky curtain hung
From earth to sky, on cords celestial swung,
Bestarred with points of palpitating sheen,
The mighty foldings of a sombre screen,
Illumed with jets of ultra-mundane birth,
The beacons of a land beyond the earth,
Beyond the ocean and the reefs of time,
The winds of sorrow, and the isles of grime.

Attendant hands closed out the skyey night,
Dreams danced about him in their fairy light,
And pilfering slumbers stole the hours away,
Until they scampered off scared by the day
That, wide-eyed, met his widely-opening eyes,
Half held in slumber, half held by surprise.
Again he tried to break his vision's bound,
And though at first his head seemed circling round
In dizzy sweep, it quickly settled down.
The river dimple, and the mountain frown,
The tufted crag, the pine-glades wet with dew,
Clouds golden-fleeced and clouds of sober hue,
Clouds misty-soft and mists of cloudy blue,
The meadow-masquerade of foggy marsh,
The granite pillars of the hillside harsh,
The shafts of sunshine chasing truant shades
Through leafy archways into flowery glades,
The dreamy splendor of the ivied towers
Of verdure melting into boundless bowers
Of everglade and forest-mantled plain,—
All these with love-lit eyes tried to retain
His glances for their own as forth he peered.
Afar the lofty hill-tops proudly reared
Their royal-purple robes in kingly poise,
While green-clad pages, pertly smiling boys,
The lesser hillocks, swarmed attendant round
To bear their missives to the water's bound.
The lake's warm bosom seemed with love aglow
As lip to mouth it caught the river's flow,

The brooklet's gurgle, and the tiny stream
That toddled childlike to its mother-gleam.
Anear was a plateau, whence marching men
Strode down a slope around a boggy fen,
And up a rise a half a mile away.
There soon along the ridge a great array
Of axemen swung their glinting blades in haste,
And slashed the forest till the spot lay waste
As cyclone-signet sets its searing mark.
The long day through from early dawn till dark
He watched with languid interest the swarm
Of workers, barrier-building 'gainst the storm
Of war that thundered near the horizon's verge.
Anon polite attendants tried to urge,
By tempting food, his appetite to come.
Awhile he'd doze, and then the throbbing drum
Would call to life the bugle's blaring notes,
And high-pitched whoops from copper-tinted throats
Would answer back their rousing martial strain,
And strike with grating jargon on his brain.
As sunset's flame sank into embered night
A moving picture flitted 'fore his sight,
A weird kaleidoscopic interchange
Of colors flashing, picturesque, and strange.
With clash and clang unceasing rang the din
From axes like revolving lights, that in
And out from glint to gloom incessant swung,
While tottering, towering forest-giants wrung
Their anguished limbs, then grovelled in the dust,
Imperial things consigned to moth and rust.

The garish beams of eventide's cloud-cliffs—
Reflected back by white-winged, rippling skiffs,
Canoe-surrounded, wreathed in river mist—
Affrighted by the sundown shadows whist,
Grew pale and faint and fled on pinions fleet
To trail the pathway of the day-god's feet.
The axe-ring ceased, and darkness, silence-clad,
Swung o'er the lake and wood its censer sad,
And Henry felt its incense-fuming air
Crowd on his soul the dark pall of despair.
"A useless burden, like a worn-out boat,
My fate, I fear me now, 'twill be to float
Within the shadows when the fleet goes by.
'Tis better far for man that he should die
Where foe to foe with bull-dog fervor hold
Than drag a dying life to pity's fold
And claim a shelter—Ah, what hear I now?
A plaintive ripple as of gentle prow
Of music's shell athwart the crest of song."
The mournful prelude ceased, and then a strong
Sweet voice trilled on the balsam-laden breeze,
And woke far-mocking sprites among the trees.
Its rich, melodious swell, a flowing tide,
At times would ebb until the echoes died,
Then back upon the listener's heart would roll,
And almost hypnotize his very soul.
'Tis different far to list to music's strains
Where business lords it o'er her cold domains,
And narrow, dusty, care-worn haunts of toil
The finer instinct-jewels blunt and moil,

To what it is to lie at nature's feet,
Where field and forest, lake and sky-land greet,
With low primeval voices undefiled
The old-world echoes in their precincts wild.
Lee's spell-bound heart seemed floating with the air—
Each stanza's impress firmly settled there—
And from his well-skilled brain evolved the song,
Translated as the music purled along.

Song.

Intertwined with the trill of the trees
Sings the soft sweet sound of the sea,
As borne in the arms of the breeze
It sang of old to me,
When the gloom of the summer gloam
Crept into the heart of home.

Intertwined with the breath of the bloom
Sways the soft sweet scent of the flowers,
That grew in my mother's room
In the childhood-gleaming hours,
When the gloom of the summer gloam
Crept into the heart of home.

Intertwined with the wash of the wave
Sobs the slow sad sound of the bell,
That over my mother's grave
Intoned its solemn knell,
When the gloom of the summer gloam
Crept into the heart of home,

VII.

The singing ceased, and then a broken tongue
Soliloquized in surly tones that rung
With clear distinctness on the listener's ear.
Aside the window stood the speaker near ;
A thorough-blooded, untamed forest-child,
Whose Indian-English, uncouth, gutt'ral, wild,
A saturated tincture seemed to be
Of thought expressed in uncurbed savagery.
"I've heard the sweet-voiced forest-songsters all
Wake up the wildwood lone with love's fond call ;
I've heard mysterious warblers thrill the night,
When moonbeams lit the lake with whitened light ;
But all I ever heard sinks in the shade,
Dazed by the music of this matchless maid.
Ah, honey-throated human bird, whose song
Yet vibrates through my being with a strong,
Weird, witchcraft's spell, I'll never rest until
I claim you as my own ! An Indian's will
May bend like willow wand before the wind,
But French and English tyrants both will find
That wand-like it will backward lash again
With force redoubled to its own domain.
I hate you both, you pale-faced races base !
Each one would wipe us from the green earth's face
With hand remorseless, if that hand could do
The deeds the brain would fain 'twould carry through.

For English wolves I fought until by chance
The young squaw crossed me from the realm of France,
And then I smoked the peace-pipe with her chief.
Oh, Manito, for me is there relief?
She spurned my love! I tried to steal by wiles
The peerless beauty with her rose-bud smiles,
Yet all my efforts bore but blasted fruit,
And I, a slave, a helpless, useless brute,
Prowl blindly round the light in search of fate—
Less pleasure far it is to love than hate!
'Tis life or death to me to win or lose,
And naught whate'er of danger I'll refuse.
No half-way course will suit my stubborn heart—
'Tis life with her or death from her apart!
So far I've failed, but failure woos success.
Peace, patience, soul! Anon with fierce caress
I'll bear her light form to my home afar,
Led by the guidance of the western star.
But, list, a sound! I must retire with care;
A wary brave should of surprise beware.
It well behooves me now to scan my ground,
For if discovered in forbidden bound
A dagger's thrust or whistling bullet will
Cool the hot blood or bid the heart be still."
A guarded movement made by Lee to look
Into the night, a darkness-covered book,
Had caused the speaker like a startled deer
This way and that throughout the gloom to peer,
And then with lithesome action, soft and fleet,
Glide down the hill unto the lonely beat

Upon the sward, that clothed the river's brink,
Where he was wont to walk at night and drink
With quenchless thirst the fitful bursts of song
From her melodious voice, that swept along
The chords of even with the tuneful breeze
To melt in mystic silence 'mong the trees.

VIII.

Lee gazed intently in the gloom awhile.
The lake's face, upturned with a ghostly smile,
Was decked with shudd'ring shadows manifold,
A steel-gray nocturn from the temple old,
Where nature prays throughout the depths of night
In suppliant, lowly tones to God for light.
The black sky blended with the black woods round.
He saw no living thing, and heard no sound
Save such as seemed of magic birth and growth,
Far murmurs over lake, or sky, or both,
Vague, undefined, and distant in their play—
Mayhap the echoes of the buried day,
Or strains preluding morning yet unborn.
He turned him to his restless couch forlorn,
And tried to sleep; but sleep, that perverse thing,
Comes oft unsought, and often sought takes wing.
For hours, or what seemed hours, he tried in vain,
And lived in thought his whole life o'er again;
But when at last he gave up in despair
The fickle goddess smoothed his tumbled hair,
And sealed his eyelids with her soothing kiss.
Not long in tranquil slumber's bower of bliss

His spirit lay, but up and off it sped
With flying feet adown the path that led
To lands debatable 'tween death and life,
The clime of Dreamland with its terrors rife,
Its hopes, its fears, its grandeur, and its gloom,
Its hints of glory and foretastes of doom.

IX.

He dreamed he walked beside the river's rim
'Mid green-eyed grass, o'er rocky ledges grim,
Past pebbly strands, past tawny sand-dunes soft,
Through brooding shades, until he climbed aloft,
And from commanding knoll looked down long aisles,
Moss-paven, into drowsy glen's defiles,
The peopled shadows, whence the lilting song
Of untold myriads chorused loud and long
A crackling clamor all the close noon-heat,
When wind-tides ebbed in soft siesta sweet.
A wood nymph—nay, a maiden, dressed in white,—
Tripped up through blots of shadow into sight.
Dim-pictured first as saint on cloistered wall,
From farthest entrance of a hemlock hall
She forward came, a graceful, winsome girl,
With dainty ebon locks in crispy curl,
And in the foreground, sunlight fretted o'er,
Bloomed at the threshold of the forest door.
Then darted swiftly from a darkened copse,
As on its prey a glitt'ring serpent drops,
A painted savage, who with agile arms,
All heedless of the frightened girl's alarms,

Grasped her in powerful clasp and fled away,
A demon laughing o'er his wild foray.
She screamed and aid-imploing arms outheld
Toward Lee, who sprang in haste by rage impelled
To headlong effort. On and on they sped.
Swiftly through clinging bur-clumps leaped the red
With scant concern for what stood in his path,
While, fuming hotly with chivalric wrath,
The English errant-knight with fury mute,
Dashed after him in desperate pursuit.
Down deep-sunk glens, through coverts vast and dank,
O'er mountain-haunts, round muddy corn-brakes rank,
Through welt'ring maize-plots, o'er the broiling brows
Of sandy hillocks, with convulsive vows
Of vengeance panting from his gasping tongue
He tracked the brave, who, supple-sinewed, sprung
Through bush and brake with ever-growing speed,
His burden bearing without cark or heed.
The shapes of unknown creatures, foul and fair,
Crept, flew, or ran about him everywhere,
Thrust forth their clammy limbs athwart his way,
And tried to clog and trip his footsteps' play.
Great wart-mailed toads, as large as rabbits, rolled
With motions sluggish and with limbs ice-cold
Through weed-encumbered sloughs of green-scummed ooze,
And tried with mire-born instinct to refuse
Him passage through their reeded citadels,
While badgers, bobbing up from grave-like cells,
Snapped at his flying feet. Then wilder yet
The forest grew, and haze-clouds, blood-red, met

Before his straining vision, and in blind
Distress he lagged at hopeless length behind,
Then falling, sank down, down until he woke
In time to note the morning-cannon's smoke
Curl lakeward round the dawning's coy gray hood,
As maiden-like it peered above the wood.

X.

"A dream, I vow," he thought aloud, "and yet
It seemed as real as if there had beset
Me round those hideous things in very truth.
It was as if I'd strayed away, in sooth,
Into some goblin-zone where thoughts of guile,
The acme-pointing tips of wicked wile
That venom-sting the hearts of men to crime,
Were doomed to pass a penitential time,
Duration boundless, while their punishment
Was pain to sight by darts of loathing sent
From quivers full of undone deeds and schemes,
Too vile for doing save in demon-dreams.
How glad I am to look on melting greens
That tint with tender radiance the scenes
Enthroned on hill, embowered in ample vale,
And know that though I'm weary, weak, and pale,
I'm in the living arms of mother earth,
A nurse whose nourishment is mingled mirth
And sorrow, blended into wholesome fare
For mortals tended by her watchful care.
There go the axemen to their post again.
They plant their colors on the verging plain,

And bare-armed, coatless, officers and men,
Along the ridge from lakeside unto fen,
A tow'ring breast-work pile in zig-zag line
With bristling points like quills of porcupine,
A vast abattis, musket-proof, I fear."
Afar was busy work, and busy near
Were solemn savages in stately way
Their war-paint donning for the welcome fray,
With airs of gravity their eyes betrayed,
When furtive glances over field and glade
Gave flashing signals of each fiery soul
Eager to burst in flames beyond control.

XI.

The soldiers toiled for hours before the fort,
Their patriotic fervor making sport
Of what had otherwise been slavish task.
The wounded alien, 'neath a languid mask
Of chaining weakness, chafed with fiery zeal
To wing a message-bird, and quick reveal
Unto his countrymen the tree-heaped snare,
And bid them of its dangers to beware.
Then stole the first throb of a pensive strain
O'er rustic barricades in sweet refrain
Into the inner chambers of his soul,
There through the mystic aisles to swell, and roll,
And faint, and when almost forgotten flow
Up from the fountains of the long ago.
Tho' short the song, the words of little worth,
The tones warmed love-elves into blushing birth.

Song.

Love strays lonely out by the willows,
Wanders lone by the alders gray,
Sits and sighs by the blue lake's billows
Hermit-like the live-long day.

Love afar by the dun rocks roaming
Watches wearily over the way,
Wind-swept, dreary, low in the gloaming,
Chiding gently her mate's delay.

Love alone is waiting, waiting,
Over the brink of the grave of the day—
Waiting her mate and the time for mating,
Mist-enfolded and far away.

The music's soft vibrations, minor-keyed—
More fit for bower than warlike fort, indeed—
Sweet air-waves, settled into calmness dumb,
And soon Lee saw a white-robed lady come
Upon the scene adown a root-ribbed walk,
And lo! behind her did an Indian stalk
With proud look on his young and handsome face.
"What!" wondered Lee. "My dream and bootless chase!
The first part of my dream personified!
Will that lithe figure, full of fiery pride,
Endeavor to fulfil the rest to-day?
Would I had strength to step athwart his way!
'Tis she, the maid, and he, in truth, the brave
Who to my dreaming hours such torments gave.

She wanders on all heedless of the hound
Whose foot-falls make no sound upon the ground,
And who, no doubt, would haste to grasp the chance
To carry off this lily-bud of France,
A flower fairer than a morn in June,
A fragrant poem swathed in love's own tune.
I'm helpless as my dream foretold, or time
Would tell few moments on his circling chime
Ere round that smoke-stained throat I'd leave a brand,
Deep-pitted by remorseless British hand."
With growl of discontent the wound-bound man
In rugged Anglo-Saxon heaped a ban
Upon the plumed and painted wild-wood beau,
Who marched with supercilious motion slow
Behind the maid, as if both sea and land
Stretched out obedient to his command.

XII.

Surrounded by a bowing group, the girl—
The coy breeze toying with each queenly curl
That gem-like edged her snowy-tinted neck,—
Gazed eager on the rough-edged forest-wreck,
Alive with energy in full display.
A brief space passed, and then in war's array
A column from the rear paraded by,
And as the stalwart companies drew nigh
They cheered and halted on a knoll-marked slope.
"A boon I ask, a boon I fondly hope
Your loyal heart will bend with joy to grant.
I know your love is staunch as adamant

For France and home, and for our standard fair.
You sang with fervor, rousing, grand, and rare,
A patriotic song the solemn night
We bade farewell unto Quebec's grim height.
To-day beyond yon hills an army comes.
Right soon will swell the beat of hostile drums !
The muskets' rattle and the bugle's blare
Will blend discordant on the balmy air,
And from fate's scales foul destiny or doom
May hurl us, dying, on our country's tomb.
The boon I crave is that you'll cheer the men
By singing now for them that song again."
The speaker ceased, and Lee gave earnest ear
The fair-faced damsel's answering words to hear.
"Marquis Montcalm," her bell-toned voice replied,
"It thrills my soul with patriotic pride
To think that you should deem my feeble song
Of service to arouse the war-trained throng
To noble deeds and feats of daring high.
I'll do my best. A child of France, I'll try
For home and land to do whate'er I may.
God save our soldiers in the coming fray."
"Thanks, maiden, thanks a thousand times I give !
A glorious thing it is for France to live—
To live and love—mayhap to die for her !
At her proud shrine each man's a worshipper,
And every theme that wakes their warlike ire
Fans up the flames of patriotic fire."
In stirring strains the song-notes rose and fell
And rang with girlhood's sweet bewitching spell,

Their changes deep in many a manly heart
That leaped responsive to perform its part.

Song.

The lilies will bloom when the lion is dead,
The lilies of France in their glory,
And their tendrils crown the mound o'er his head.
The lilies will bloom when ages have fled,
The lilies of France in their glory.

The lion will droop 'neath the breath of the flowers,
The lilies of France in their glory,
But the sun will warm through the summer hours,
And the rain will cherish with balmy showers
The lilies of France in their glory.

Oh, wide and far through the wildwood lone,
The lilies of France in their glory
Will grow to the verge of the lake-mist's zone—
Yea, will climb to the crest of the mountain's throne,
The lilies of France in their glory!

Up! soldiers, up! and bear on to fame
The lilies of France in their glory!
On the lion's tomb carve your country's name,
And round it enwreath in circles of flame
The lilies of France in their glory!

With three hot cheers for France and three times three
For her whose tongue with fiery ecstasy
Had brimmed each soul, they marched with lofty pride
To man the breastwork on the rough hill-side,

And many a one throughout the fatal day,
When fainting 'neath the perils of the fray,
Was cheered by mental echoes of that song,
Till arms exhausted o'er again grew strong.

XIII.

"I thought her fair," growled Lee, "and passing fair
No doubt she is, but little cause to care
Have I for dangers that beset her way.
A prowling brave or foppish Frenchman may
Take her to wife, and welcome be his choice.
A beauteous face, a music-laden voice
Of foreign race can have no charm for me.
I'd rather wed a girl of low degree,
With features plain and dearth of female grace,
With grand old Britain for her native place,
Than win the loveliest maid that France can boast,
The peerless one of all a nation's host.
And you, Montcalm, will need more potent arms
To hurl aside the brunt of war's alarms
Than songs from maiden's lips, however sweet.
A different song your soldiers soon will greet,
The chorused cheers from throats that well can cheer,
The volleyed fire from ranks that know not fear.
Ah, off you go, a fair, a lovely thing,
Rare type of beauty in its blooming spring,
With every movement witching in its grace—
Ah, wert thou but a scion of my race!
Poh! Nonsense—List the drum-beat's distant roll!
Oh, may the British lion smite the jowl

Of hostile foemen into fell defeat,
And tramp the lilies 'neath his vengeful feet!

XIV.

A harmless prelude from a leaf-screened glen,
Unheeded by the busy hive of men,
Struck light strains on grim battle's harp-strings tense
Till high noon stared upon the forest dense,
When ringing volleys, sharply pitched and long,
Awoke the echoes with their touches strong.
Then dropped the axes, and in triple row
The men white-coated watched the coming foe.
In columns red the attacking force advanced.
Like will-o'-wisp the death-lights gleamed and danced
Around and o'er them, waves that doomward rolled,
Urged by the madness of unreason bold.
Brave souls were there from sunny Devon's plains,
Proud lion-hearts from London's wide domains,
Hot sons of Ireland's emerald-tinted isle,
Hale kilted Scots, and native scouts in file
Extended far through copse and grim ravine—
A warlike setting to a peaceful scene.
On, on, and on through showers of shot they sped;
O'er tangling obstacles they pushed ahead
Until the bristling breastworks' mighty mass
Towered up, an obstacle they could not pass.
What man could do they did with manhood's might,
And fought as well as Britain's sons could fight,
But vain the attempt. Fierce Highland clansmen died,
Backed up by heroes born on Shannon's side,

And throats from Thames and Tyne cheered until death
Smothered the fervor of their panting breath.
The ranks dissolved in blood, the fight was o'er,
The lilies, bathed in martyred British gore,
Swayed o'er the stricken field by victory fanned,
While Triumph crowned Montcalm with ready hand.

CANTO THE THIRD.

I.

A GRAY rock, multi-fissured, lichen-clad,
With darkly-frowning forehead, gloomy sad
And stern, rose from its couch, leaf-curtained, green,
Flower-flecked and fair, and in the mirror-sheen
Of water, laving lovingly its breast,
Beheld the image of its rugged crest
A-quiver with the mighty-tensioned strain
Which held at rest the ofttime bounding plain.
Three elms o'erhead tossed upward-linking limbs,
The framework of a canopy, whence hymns,
Bird-warbled forth from music-burdened bills,
In soft tones fluttered to the far-off hills,—
The purple-distant nests of mist-birds lone,—
Whence dream-bells wafted them in monotone
Across the bar into the great unknown,
Where all our hopes are hid in phantom-ore
Beyond the spirit-grasp from mortal shore.
Faint wayside blossoms, exquisitely frail,
Held up their trembling armlets weak and pale
Anear the moss-rim of the rude rock's side
Unto the vine-hung thickets bud-bedyed,

As tender nestling toward the parent nest,
Or dimpled baby toward its mother's breast.
Isle after isle with multi-tinted wings
Seemed skimming skyward like to living things,
On in the distance melted into haze,
As in the gloaming fade departing days.
Lee slowly walked anear the water's edge,
And toiled along the rude-veined boulder's ledge
Until he reached the trident-group of trees,
That shook their gnarled arms at the listless breeze
With mocking scorn, and longed for winter's sweep
To rouse the lake-god from his sluggish sleep.
He leaned against a twisted shag-barked limb,
And mused aloud in accents dour and grim :
" Man's life is like the round of Nature's days—
Spring—summer—autumn—winter—each through ways
Of gloom and sunshine, frost and fire, dash on
To grasp the hand-clasp of their comrades, gone
Before them into valleys mist-embraced,
With endless fervor and with bootless haste.
My pulses thrilled with hope's ecstatic glow,
As throbs the war-drum 'neath the victor's blow,
When Howe, the hero, marshalled us in line,
And victory's star-flame o'er us seemed to shine.
Now slow with muffled beat the brain-waves moan
Their dirge-like death notes in low monotone
About the wreck, dismantled of my hopes
Upon a sea of blackness, o'er which gropes
In brooding anguish grief on drooping wings
With goblin-horrors round in circling strings.

The lilies—aye, they bloom in splendor now !—
Mayhap may fade. I register a vow
To hurl their blossoms to the Lion's feet,
To grace his royal couch with garlands meet,
In tribute of the triumph soon to come,
The rally round the rousing British drum,
The conquering charge, that wave-like will erase
From history's beach the record of disgrace.
What now ?”

He dropped behind the burnished leaves
Of vines, enwoven as a matron weaves
The lace-mesh, but by touch more skilful blent,
And watching through a tiny fabric-rent,
Beheld an Indian maiden gently glide
A barken shallop to the rocklet's side
With graceful paddle softly water-dipt,
Whence glint-eyed, liquid diamonds brightly dript.
A red flower flamed upon her rich black hair ;
Another nestled on her bosom bare,
Pinned to the beaded robe that rose and fell
Responsive to the throbbing underswell.
A color warm shone through her clear brown skin
In blushing wavelets 'neath the mantle thin,
And budded, beauty-laden, from her lips.
Her deep, wide eyes, on fancy-distant trips,
Seemed searching into times and scenes remote,
When bubbling from her swelling, rounded throat
A crooning song with flute-like rise and fall—
A human tuning to a bird's love-call—

Told to the trees and stones, the bees and flowers,
The sorrows of the threshold-touching hours,
When Love's domain is nigh and Love beckons on
His prey into the web when freedom's gone.

Indian Maiden's Song.

When the airy peaks of the early dawn
Spring up from their slumbers deep,
When the flitting shadows, pale and wan,
Steal off to their daytime sleep,
The lover wooes 'neath the trysting tree,
But mine—ah, mine!—has forgotten me.

When the stars shine down on the twilight land
As the purple hills grow dim,
And the zephyr tones from the distant strand
Faint far by the river's rim,
The lover wooes 'neath the trysting tree,
But mine—ah, mine!—has forgotten me.

When the breeze-skein tangles the tasseled ears
Of the golden-tinted maize,
And the light-winged smoke from the wigwam rears
A throne for the shining haze,
The lover wooes 'neath the trysting tree,
But mine—ah, mine!—has forgotten me.

When the shy gray rabbit seeks his mate
In the feathery blooms on the hill,
When the wind-swept, mystical night grows late,
And the locust's life is shrill,
The lover wooes 'neath the trysting tree,
But mine—ah, mine!—has forgotten me!

When the coyotes cry in the hemlock glade
At the mocking whip-poor-will,
When the cloud-built bars hold the moon in shade,
And the screech-owl plumes his bill,
The lover wooes 'neath the trysting tree,
But mine—ah, mine!—has forgotten me.

When the ruddy gleam of the sunset shines
Afar in the golden west,
When the stars of night peep down through the pines
At the stars on the river's breast.
The lover wooes 'neath the trysting tree,
But mine—ah, mine!—has forgotten me.

II.

The last note, silver-throated, bird-wise rose
And in its tiny beak bore off the woes
Of this wild maiden to the altar-fire,
Fed by the fagots of the soul's desire,
That somewhere in the vast unknown burns e'er
Above a cindered mass of woe and care.
With red lips silent and with eyes lashed down,
The flower-flame glowing on her neck's flush brown,
She sat in statuesque repose awhile ;
Then o'er her features played a fleeting smile,
That fled before a mental lava-stream,
Which welled volcano-like with molten gleam
And bared the chaos of her wildwood soul.
The torrent-rush of words, with swell and roll
Of passion-tinctured fervor, thrilled the ear
Of him who heard, while admiration, fear,

And wonder, shoulder-jostling for first place,
In turn possessed his wan and pallid face.
"Go, girlhood's tender dream, once sun-bathed bright
As God's own bow, strung tense with corded light,
And arched across the blue, cloud-sailing sea,
Star-belting time unto eternity !
Go, torture-robed, death-fraught and ghastly curse
Down to a dismal grave ! Ah, should a worse
Fate fall upon the white-bark tinted face
Of her, who did my lover's love erase
With foul deceit or incantation vile,
My lips perchance again might wear a smile !
What happiness 'twould be to bend above
The dream-couch of the foreign, hawk-loved dove,
And swiftly drive the gleaming dagger deep
Within her snowdrift breast, and change to sleep
Eternal with a blow her visions bright,
And hurl her soul to realms of endless night !"
She ceased, and then her spirit shone upon
Another feature of her brain, and gone
At once was all the murder-craving thirst,
And song again with pathos-muffled burst
Communed with what we feel but cannot see,
The viewless warders of each flower and tree,

Song.

I went to the dell in the dead of the night,
When the horns of the moon were thin,
To gather the buds of the love-plant bright,
And the seeds that nestled within.
I stole with a step like the silent mist,
As it trails o'er the hills afar
From the wigwam's folds through the pine-clumps
trist,
Will-o'-wisp for my guiding star.

My heart throbbed high in my throat the while,
As I wended my way alone
To the marshy core of the dank defile
Near the frog-chief's reedy throne,
Where low in the shade of a ferny fell
There bloomed, by the night air fed,
A plant that treasured a mystic spell
In the leaves that shrouded its head.

The spirit of love from his throne above
On a time dropt a nosegay sweet,
With a curling swirl like the wings of a dove
At an Indian-maiden's feet.
And there at the very day and hour,
Just once in the season's round,
The sleeping heart of the magic flower
Awakes with a thrilling bound.

At the last low blush of the setting sun
It peeps from its nest of leaves,
When the stars bloom out on the twilight dun
It blooms on the drowsy breeze.

When the blackness thickens the seed-bud fills,
But the midnight demon dread
The delicate spray and its fruitage kills
By the crush of his cruel tread.

If the fruit can be plucked by an Indian maid
At the noontide hour of night,
Who steals alone through the coal-black shade
Unfettered by aught of fright,
To her will be given the power to draw
Her lover back to her feet,
To make her wish his imperative law,
And bind him in serfdom sweet.

The watching birds had whispered to me
That my lover, once fond and true,
Had broken the vow by the plighting tree,
And had offered his love anew ;
That he saw on the river, the sky, the lake,
But a pale-face image fair ;
That his heart like a hunter toiled in the wake
Of a luring alien's snare.

So I went to the dell in the dead of the night,
When the horns of the moon were thin ;
Though my heart beat fast 'twas not with affright
But with high desire to win.
The drooping evergreens lashed my face,
As if startled from slumber deep,
And the night-owl hopped to his hiding-place
When I groped down the gully steep.

From the brow of the hill I heard the bark
Of a lone wolf down in the glade,
While a phantom, panther-like in the dark,
Moved with noiseless step in the shade,

And it followed me down with its eyes aglare,
As pitch-pine torches glow,
Till its fiery breath entangled my hair
With its panting ebb and flow.

I reached out once, I reached out twice,
But my limbs refused my will ;
I tried again, but lo ! in a trice
Came an ice-cold gust from the hill,
And nothing was clasped in my trembling hand—
My hand that had failed its part—
But leaf-dust brittle and clammy sand.
Thus I lost the key to his heart.

III.

"The old world's play upon the new world's stage !"
Exclaimed our hero, while again love's rage
The lake's fair mirror lashed with waking oar,
As sped the maiden to the farther shore.
"A tragic drama with its puppet toys,
Each cargo-burdened with more care than joys.
Act after act uncoils, while actors rant,
And vent their spleen in passion-tattered cant.
'Tis well I led her sire behind the screen,
And held the curtain till his eyes had seen
The heavy villain red rehearse his part.
With wound of spirit and with body smart
The aspiring brute was quickly ostracised,
And as reward—one, too, right highly prized—
The father introduced me to his child,
Who on my pain-worn features sweetly smiled,

And by her gracious presence, sunshine wise,
Lightened the blackness of my mental skies.
Yon squaw, so ruby-lipped and dagger-eyed,
A cornucopia of crimson-dyed
And passion-fuming love, will have to go
For safety's sake where whole plantations grow,
And blossom rank with love-begetting flowers,
Which yield their virtues to the daytime hours,
And bloom the summer through with laudsome zest
To aid lone maidens on their husband-quest.
They'll mate, no doubt, their wayward fancies o'er;
He'll strut in war-paint, feast on human gore,
And smoke in lordly silence, while she bears
In endless drudgery her life-long cares,
And swart papposes, clad in robes of dirt,
Will brood o'er, henlike, to protect from hurt.
My heart? Nay! Conscience, ask you such a thing?
My wayward fancies? Soon may such take wing
If on my heart they flutter for a perch!
No Englishman would ever dare to smirch
His country's love by nestling in his breast
A foreign birdling, howsoever blest
With beauty, virtue, or the thousand charms
Which twine around her their endearing arms!
I willingly admit those charms, and raise
My voice to render tribute in their praise
As to a beauteous cloud, a rainbow's beam,
The sunlight's dawning blush or dying gleam.

IV.

The hills, mist-hooded, seemed to lean in state
Against the sky-line's distant blue, in wait
For homage from the purple, columned clouds,
That moved in majesty, and swept the crowds
Of straggling fog-wreaths from their high-poised path
Athwart the heaven's dome with naught of wrath,
But touch as gentle as an angel's sigh.
Across the water came the day-born cry
Of nature's carol, many-voiced and sweet,
From rock and streamlet, field and lone retreat,
The swell of bird-song, leaf-harp, insect-hum,
Combined—of everything, for naught is dumb
In nature's ample lap except to those
Too deaf for aught save thunder's booming throes.
“Intruders, ah!” The leaves pricked up their ears;
The pine boles whistled out their boding fears;
The sly wolf slipped beneath a hollow tree;
The timid rabbit scampered hurriedly
Unto his warren's mouth, and with his mate
Peeped through the undergrowth with eyes dilate.
“What noise was that?” a sleek-skinned lynx inquired,
While softly loping to a spot retired.
A snorting stag sprang past him at full bound,
Spurred on to headlong fleetness by the sound.
A bear cuffed off her cubs with awkward paws,
And rolled toward her lair with gnashing jaws

And sullen growl. The wolves with signal calls
Rang up the pack through dense-arched cedar halls,
While drowsy beavers, by their night toil spent,
Splashed through the water in their discontent,
As roused from daytime rest or reverie
They left their couches 'neath the basswood tree,
And paddled swiftly to their barricades,
Whose water-guarded mouths yawned up from glades
And meadows, where their earthworks, staunch and strong,
Arrested brooklets in their bubbling song.
A fuller swell, a rolling drum-tide, boomed,
And o'er an open knoll white-coated loomed
A band of music whose melodious reeds
Told of the glory and the mighty deeds
That halo-like the lily-cross surmounted.
The very movements of the men recounted
Their recent triumphs, as in gay array
They filed along the narrow woodland way.
The bear, the lynx, the wolf, the beaver, all
Vanished beneath the music's magic thrall.
Some dashed away to depths unfathomed by
The hunter's rifle, or the hunter's eye,
In tangled dell, in hollow tree, or den
Bored underground and safe from hostile ken.
The squirrels and chipmunks, rats, and shy racoons
From tree-perch high, or reed-fringed, low lagoons
Shot twinkling glances of surprise or fear
Upon the gay procession that drew near.
Behind the steady tread of rank and file
A joyous group with merry jest and smile

Strolled carelessly along in train of her
To whom each bowed, a willing worshiper.
Nay, one, who struggled 'gainst love's tangling chain,
Gave grudging homage, but could not restrain
His adoration. On through leaf-strewn ways,
Past pink-white blooms, soft, feather-crested sprays,
Leaves curled to buds and buds uncurled to leaves,
Coarse scrubby shrubs with prickle-mounted greaves,
Quaint wheel-like whorls with crimson tipped and gold,
Green shining sword-blades, lapping fold on fold,
And pointing dagger-points with threat'ning air,
The strangers wound their course through gardens fair,
Unmarred by aught of human art or care.
Above, around, before, the leafy screen,
Limned to the densest shades of dusky green,
Hung fringed and fretted from the pillared trees,
And gently sported with the languid breeze,
When lo! as change from night to sun-washed dawn,
The sable tapestry was rent and drawn
Aside, revealing vividly a sight
Eye-surfeiting with multi-tinted light.
A downy cloud with purple-dappled crest
And ermine-feathered wings drawn to its breast,
Like bird majestic, pinnaced at rest,
Hung on the horizon's azure, polished rim,
Drank in the melting blue from heaven's brim,
And sang a soundless song in beauty's praise,
As soul to soul sings love-entrancing lays
In tones too pure for grosser sense to hear.
O'erhead the zenith's glowing atmosphere

Was guileless of a stain upon its robe
Save that of glory from the sun's great globe.
Below a gleaming water-belt curved round
A huge hill, treeless, fissure-scarred, and browned
By storm-bolts, which aloof in surly pride
Frowned grimly down upon the verdure-dyed
And undulating plain, that answering gave
For every frown a smile. An architrave
Of foliage-tracery clung to the pines
That towered their pillars high in columned lines
Above the humbler spruce and tamarack,
And formed a background shading green to black,
In vivid contrast to the open plain
Where two lacrosse-teams strove with tug and strain,
With daunting yell, and fleet-limbed fury hot,
To score the honors of the victors' lot.
Upon a bosky knoll, with shrill outcry,
The squaws excited watched the strife come nigh,
Picked out their lovers with their hawk-like gaze,
And cheered them on with loud, unstinted praise.
Lee looked with dancing eyes upon the fray,
And saw an agile figure break away
From what had been the fiercest fight of all,
Flourish upon his stick the precious ball,
Point toward the pale-faced group his painted face,
Dodge each antagonist with easy grace,
Bound like a panther bounds at sight of prey,
Stop, as a panther stops when brought to bay,
Before the French girl, at her feet his prize
With humble gesture but with haughty eyes

Drop down chivalric as a belted knight,
Then spring aside and vanish out of sight
"A graceful tribute unto beauty's queen,"
Said one who first had partly placed between
The maid and fancied danger ready hand.
A laugh ran round the merry-hearted band,
But Lee again had met his dream awake
And shuddered for her future safety's sake.
The ball was thrown into a panting crowd,
That nearer came with lusty chorus loud
Of cries excited, and again the play
Resumed the tenor of its wonted way.

V.

The game was over and the strife was done,
The victors' laurels had been lost and won.
The forest path had been retraced again,
Led by the martial clang of music's strain,
And strolling back, by some odd freak of chance
The English captive and the maid from France
Had parted from the busy groups around.
"A beaver's meadow? Yes, yon marshy ground
With wealth of nodding cat-tails growing rank
Is due to that low, ragged beaver-bank,
With points on edge like quills of porcupine,
That runs athwart the green-verged water-line,"
Her answer was unto his query made.
The landscape settled with an even grade
Of forest-lawn, cone-dotted here and there
With evergreens, a contrast passing fair

Unto the gashed ravine beyond, that told
Of nature's fury in some fight of old.
"I catch a glimpse of beaver huts," he said,
"Beyond the boulders of that scathed rock-head.
The path is easy. Dare we wander down
To yonder hillock with the rock-ledge brown,
A rugged forehead 'neath a tender mass
Of leaf-locks?"

"Yes, we may with safety pass
Along the stream toward the fort, that peeps
Its rustic stockade o'er the tangled heaps
Of barricade, that block the course of sight
From that round-hooded hill with frills of white
Engrained with purple, yellow, red, and blue,
Defiant of Dame Fashion's creeds of hue.
A sentry-line encircles us around,
A proof, I trust, we stand on safety's ground."
They sauntered o'er the velvet moss and through
Low aisles of shrubbery, whence startled flew
Slate-colored winged and fiery-crested birds,
While scolding chipmunks, tail-beruddled herds,
Half-flew, half-jumped from bush to bush away,
In terror part, and part in mocking play.
The beaver architecture, bravely planned
And master-fashioned by the busy band,
A theme for conversation gave awhile
As sluggishly they roamed through a defile,
The river at their feet and rocks around,
Whose battlemented sides formed vision's bound.

"I heard you sing of flowers a warlike song,"
He said, "and yet methinks that flowers belong
To love. Can you not sing to me a strain
Of love—of flowers love-wreathed in sweet refrain?"

"I sang of love, of patriotic love,
The love that Frenchmen ever hold above
All other worldly loves, and willingly
Will sing in patriotic strains to thee.
A soldier's daughter, I, with heart and ear
Attuned to love of country, hold most dear
The battle-flag that Frenchmen wave on high.
My French heart bids me evermore to try
By word and deed to haste the promised time
When France shall rule supreme the mighty clime
That pens within its fold both frost and fire.
The lake, the forest, all that men desire
Of wealth of metal, or of yield of land,
New France shall hold for those at her command.
The ocean's tides alone on either hand
Will bound the coming empire's vast expanse."
"Are there no rivals worthy to advance
Opposing claims?"

"Pray, pardon, I forgot
A moment's space your foreign blood. The lot
Of England here must be the lot of those
Borne down to earth by stronger, braver foes.
You start—turn red! Ah, curb the words would spring
In fiery answer! List, I'm going to sing!"

Song.

A sunbeam peeped o'er a hill of haze,
The tomb of the buried night,
And its young heart leaped to wing its ways
Through the curtained halls of the clouds, ablaze
With the banners rich in their glinting rays
Of its sisters bright,
That, like fabled fays,
Shook showers of light
From their dancing limbs,
That brimmed o'er the rims
Of the bars of glory,
As the jewelled streams of an olden story.

With a downward dart on its way it sped
Through the home of cloud and rain.
It kissed a cone on a pine-tree's head ;
Brought a brighter blush to a sumach red ;
Looked into a nest where a mother-bird fed
Its nestlings twain ;
Fluttered over a bed
On a brooklet's plain,
Where a lily-bud slept ;
Then coyly crept
To its bosom chilly,
And warmed into bloom a water-lily.

"An English lily that," he slyly said.
"Nay," answered she with archly-tossing head,
"All lovely things are French to me. I vow
An English flower is but a weed. There now

I see the English fire flash from your eyes
Again. You French, I English should despise,
And each despising equally may stand
On neutral ground."

"I love my native land
With all the glowing memories that wind
Her flag about my heart, and yet I find
That your sweet face is fairest of the fair
To me —"

"Hold!" interrupted she. "How dare
You speak such words with insult barbed! I hate
Your country—hate your flag—"

"Yet, maiden, wait
One moment ere you class me with your hates.
I meant no insult. When the wave abates,
That floods your brain with indignation's tide,
Mayhap not anger, nor its sister, pride,
Will garb your speech with such a robe of scorn,
But rather pity will remove the thorn—
Although the wound may yet remain unhealed—
When to your noble nature stands revealed
My hopeless homage offered from afar
To thee, as from a mortal to a star.
I love thee!"

"I reject thy love! At home
In sunny France beneath the happy dome
Of childhood's sky three merry-hearted boys,
My brothers, joined me in my youthful joys
And sorrows. One by one they fell in fight,
And now the green of summer and the white

Snow-robe of winter deck their lonely graves.
The wild North Wind his icy banner waves
Above them, and the pines moan all night long
Their gloomy requiem. I may be wrong,
Yet in my soul I cherish naught but hate
For England. Ah, could I but rule the fate—
O God, protect us ere it be too late !”

VI.

Haze-drap'ry hung in half-translucent fold
About the basement of a dun crag bold,
That held its umbrage-plumed and dark-green crown
High o'er the billows which came bubbling down
Through lines of granite gray in zig-zag swirl,
The foam flakes dancing on each liquid curl,
Their turmoil often 'neath the leafage lost,
Where bush-heads o'er the stream their tresses tossed
Like maiden love-locks to the fondling breeze.
Aside on softly-rounded knolls the trees
With green-waved beauty, ocean-sembling, played
In undulating ripples, that essayed
To wander far to solitudes sublime,
The confines of Queen Nature's mystic clime.
Upon a glacier-polished rock, that bore
The shade of etching-sunshine on its floor
In chequered leaves, square-cut and keen, there crouched
A youth, whose garb and stealthy gestures vouched
His savage birth and untamed manhood too.
Life's fitful, fiery tide pulsed fiercely through

His bronze-brown breast, and from his flaming eyes
The gleams of passion, clad in murder-guise,
With focused hate burned through the flower-rifts sweet—
The loop-holes in his leafy-lined retreat—
To where the water-wooing willows swayed
Their lover-noosing withes within a glade
Of lilies o'er a maid and youth, who sat
Upon a fallen tree unconscious that
A human panther, poised above them, bent,
With tempest-clouded brow and brain intent
On blood-shed, ready for the fatal spring.
“At last,” he hissed, “I’ll make the mountains ring
With triumph. All the waiting—sorrow—grief—
Will fold their weary wings in sweet relief,
And die content in glory’s arms when I
Put him to sleep and with the white squaw fly.
They filled the cup of vengeance brimming o’er
What time her father told me nevermore
To show my face anear the fort again
On pain of banishment to death’s domain,
And added blows to threats I’ll ne’er forget,
Though cycles pass before life’s sun has set,
Until the rankling debt is fully paid
And mine forever is the snow-browed maid.
I went with jet-like showers raining down
In piercing horror on my soul. The frown
Of God dried up my heart, but now His smile
Lights all the scene. In yonder dense defile
My braves await with sleepless eyes the sign.
’Twill soon be made. The maiden shall be mine !

This is the promised time—the very hour !
Within my muscles tense exists the power
Bequeathed me from immortal, deathless sires.
The ever-glowing, inter-flaming fires
Within the mighty zones of mountains wild
Burn vividly for me, the favorite child
Of my forefathers, altar-fed by them
To light my way to honor's diadem.
My nation far extends beyond the ken
Of narrow wisdom given bleached-faced men.
In fact it knows no limit in the west,
But vanishes beyond the big lake's breast,
The cradle of the sun, the harbor fair
Wherein the moon-bark rests secure from care,
Its sky-sail o'er. I am a chieftain great,
One who can warmly love, or fiercely hate.
I feel a bursting pain within my breast
That she alone can lull away to rest.
Beyond the star-dust, barrier-beacon light,
That spans with mellow glare the sky at night,
Her I will bear away, away, away
To where soft breezes coo the live-long day,
And birds in strains of silver sound will sing
The love notes of an everlasting spring,
And blend them round in garlands o'er our brows
The while she pledges me a lover's vows.
Oh, favored fate, to bear the maid away
O'er rivers, mountains, moorlands, where I sway
A chieftain's power, boundless and supreme,
A rooted fact and not a brain-wrought dream,

Beyond the sunset's fiery-glowing bed,
Beyond the billow-tossing river's head,
Beyond the rolling prairie's open sweep,
Where white ghosts wander far and moan and weep,
Or beg from heedless gods repose and sleep,
Afar with bee-like instinct will we fly,
Until, beneath an ever-cloudless sky,
In balmy groves of superhuman charm
We'll rest secure from aught of earthly harm,
And pitch our wigwam in the softened shade
By never-fading forest-monarchs made.
I'll leave her 'mong the matrons of my race,
And signal in from each outlying place
A mighty host of iron-hearted braves.
Ah, white herds, then you well may dig your graves !
We'll sweep the land like ocean-swelling waves,
And French and English soldiers every one
I'll sacrifice unto the high god, Sun !"

VII.

One wide-eyed glance he upward cast between
The gaps that nestled on the boscage green,
Then lynx-like over moss-veiled, wind-swept stone
He crept in silence, while the buds half-blown
From many a sweet shrub played about his hair
That, blue-black tinted, tangled without care
Its long coarse fibres 'mid the maiden fern
And feathery spray, that sprang from rocky urn
And innocently brushed his scalp-lock long.
Down headlong fissures, cleft by earth-shock strong,

Round lichened crags that acrobatic swung
On adamantine chains, or far out-hung
Their bulks unwieldly o'er the vale profound,
He nimbly scrambled unto firmer ground,
That brought him nearer yet unto his prey.
A moment's rest and then his downward way,
A cave with cob-web spinners in full play,
Embraced his form within its dusky hold,
And draped him like a death-shroud, damp and cold.
With teeth a-chatter, but with purpose high,
He crept around a quaking bog till nigh
His victims, when he drew a glinting blade,
Caressed it softly, while its glitter played
Athwart his dusky brow and straining eyes,
As silently he closed upon his prize.

VIII.

A sudden impulse bade Lee turn, although
Nor sight nor sound had warned him that a foe
Was crouched to spring, and all instinctively
He grasped and hurled a cudgel, lying free
Anear his feet, in danger's startling face.
The unexpected blow shook from its base
The savage athlete's equipoise, and o'er
The rocky rampart of the stream's steep shore
He headlong dashed upon a jutting stone,
And died without a murmur or a groan,
His body dangling half within the stream.
The frightened girl gave an hysteric scream
Caught up by one of tenfold force beyond

The rocky gorge, as if the stubborn bond
That held the soul of anguish bound had burst
Asunder, and the frantic thing accursed
Was free like evil beast to rage at will.
"Haste, lady, haste!" said Lee. "That tell-tale hill
Has told the deed already. We will need
To hurry homeward with our utmost speed!"
He grasped her hand without ado, and fled
Fast as they could along the path that led
To safety. Soon a backward glance displayed
In full pursuit the loving Indian maid,
Her long hair streaming wildly on the wind.
"Tis but a girl," he said, then saw behind
Her what spurred on his hesitating pace—
A dozen braves in silent, swinging race,
O'erleaping obstacles, himself the goal.
Before the slope's long, rugged, upward roll
Seemed endless, while the gap behind grew small.
He tried to shout, but every gasping call
Was smothered by the utter lack of breath.
Behind the footfalls of the hounds of death
Sent warning signals they were near at hand.
"Ah, there's the fort. Run! Here I'll take my stand,"
He gasped. "Send help!"
"We're saved!" the maiden cried,
And fleetly rushing down the rough hillside
A band of shouting scouts dashed on the scene,
And where the avenging savages had been
Was only nature's happy, smiling face:
All else had vanished from the peaceful place,

CANTO THE FOURTH.

I.

THE soul of expectation sat upon
The ramparts of the fort. The hours had gone
In silence, as if 'neath the influence
Of some narcotic element intense,
Until the sun had set, and sombre night-shades brown
Were creeping o'er each glade and water-down.
Around the Indian wigwams lounged the braves
In sullen gloom, and their domestic slaves,
The chatt'ring squaws, worked on in silence too,
Sure omen that a tempest was abrew.
Was that an eagle-cry, an owlet-hoot,
A warrior-wail? 'Twas naught. The air was mute
As he who fell that afternoon. Naught, say?
The echo-horns gave then a distant bray
That died in tremulo upon the hill,
Then on the twilight calm arose a shrill,
Long-cadenced cry, the looked-for signal sound.
Reclining braves sprang from their lounging ground,
A moment each stood like a snuffing hound,

Then seemed to catch the scent of death afar,
And bounded over obstacle and bar,
Responding shout for shout. E'en shrivelled hags,
In search of garbage, tossed the bundled rags
Away, which held their filthy treasures, and
Joined in the howling swarm that wildly fanned
The sudden-mounting flames of rage and woe,
While lean dogs stretched their jaws in wailing throe,
And pushed their rib-hooped sides through bush and brake,
Alert for danger and for spoil awake.
The soldiers, startled by the strange alarm,
Jostled each other in their haste to arm,
And peered with anxious eyes into the dim
Night-tide, which swept with undulations grim
O'er tangled woods and pine swamps wild and wide,
Where piping frogs and wild-cats keenly vied
The human-throated dissonance, that swung
With motion pendulous through vales that hung
Unto the bosoms of the ridges steep,
As craggy crevice to its rocky keep.

II.

The star-emblazoned sky beheld the glow,
Reflected of its jewels, dancing flow
From wave to wave crest of the dashing stream.
The sedgy shallow's alternating gleam
And gloom, dream-drapery of nature's bed,
Clung to the canopy high over head
Of leafy temples, whose tenebrious halls
Were citadels of gloom along the walls

Of which cloud-banners from the firmament,
In densest blackness grimly welding, blent
With sooty shades below. Anon a scream
And then a breathless hush. Anon a gleam
Of pitch-pine torch, a red and lurid glare,
Threw on the mountain gorge its spectral stare,
And turned the river foam-wreaths into blood.
Bleak whistling winds, with hollow, mournful thud,
Beat dismal tattoo on the long-necked pines.
Again the torchlight and again, till lines
Like fire-flies breeding in the nest of night,
From this and that direction flashed their light,
Until a storm-carved rock their goal became,
That shone a very pyramid of flame.
O'er lily-padded pools, o'er sleepy rills,
O'er antlered maples, over copse-clad hills,
O'er nodding reeds and slimy rushes rank,
From lake to river, and from bank to bank,
The ruby-glowing gleams in spangled dance,
Wooing the white moon-rays with blushing glance,
In restless speed moved on. The soldiers swarmed
Upon the ramparts, and in clusters formed
To pour their wonder in each other's ears,
And vent in whispers many pent-up fears.

III.

"The vultures gather for the hoped-for prey,"
The Englishman soliloquized. "The way
Looks dark and perilous for me just now.
No doubt they'll wish to seal some frightful vow
With my life-blood, and glut their vengeance dire
Upon a giant-altar with the fire
Of heathen sacrifice. Now, will they give
Me up, these Frenchmen? Truly as I live
I think they will, e'en as the red squaw throws
Her child into the jaws of wolfish foes
To save herself. I'm but an Englishman,
A paltry something little better than
A beast, I trow, to them. Will she a sigh
Waste for my sake if I am led to die,
A peace off'ring to soothe their venom'd rage,
Or food their brutal hunger to assuage?
Why should I care of how she wastes her sighs?
My heart—poor renegade! How I despise
Your wayward course! 'Tis well her bitter scorn
Plucked out with cruel hand the love-clad thorn
That tried to wind its tendrils round and round
Until its clinging fetters would have bound
You fast, a craven slave. New France, forsooth!
New France shall perish in its budding youth,
And wide and far above its forest grave
The grand, old English flag shall proudly wave.

The busy hand of toil shall sweep the land,
And teeming millions from the ocean's strand
On wings of commerce shall extend their flight
O'er countless leagues, until the sundown light
Shall flush the bosom of the western sea.
Some day the English-speaking race shall be
Possessors, undisturbed from pole to pole,
Of either continent. As ages roll
The world along, this new-born land shall reach
The highest pinnacle that thought or speech
Can win in glorious combat with its foes."
Then weirder, wilder yet the strains arose
Of savage grief, as forming into file
They lined along a sinuous defile,
And soon paraded out before the fort.
Like hideous demons gathered in full court
Before their king, they circled round the dead ;
The body prone, but underneath the head
A pillowing ; the eye-balls' ghastly stare
Reflecting back the torchlights' ruddy glare.

IV.

As moans the marsh wind at the summer's death,
When o'er the misty reaches sweeps its breath,
So passed the prelude of the Indians' chant
Through verdant halls and gaps of adamant,
Unto the vastness of the swamp beyond,
The lair of lily and of ferny frond.
As rings the trumpet of the storm-god's wrath,
When tempest-winged he thunders down his path,

So swelled the fervor of the fiery song
That pealed its fury-laden course along
The night-draped plain. Then dismal silence fell
And held the hillside in its claspings spell,
While each bronze throat was dumb as death itself.
Anon the spell unwound, as some wild elf
With potent touch unleashed the eloquence
From sound-barred lips, that outward boiling thence
In uncouth accents thus its course began,
And gathered vigor as it onward ran :

Oration.

"All the dew-bending flowers shed their tears for the dead,
From the stony-walled glen to the far mountain's head.
O'er the reed-covered sloughs and the evergreen glades,
And the infinite depths of the picturesque shades,
The clouds sifted out with loud thunder and pain
Yesterday, grief's forerunner, a black-tinted rain,
And I saw a red circle like blood round the sun,
As he sank in the west when his day-hunt was done.
Then the red changed to purple, the purple to gray,
And the fleecy mists clustered in love and in play
O'er the sombre-hued crags, while the stars gathered home
From their boundless day-rambles through heaven's high
dome.

In the north the bright arch of the Manito's bow
Shot its arrows of flame at some far distant foe,
And I fancied my ears felt the echoing thrill
(As I stood on the crest of a demon-piled hill)
Of the passing of souls from this death that we live
To the holier life, the Great Spirit can give.
Then a voice, faint and far, seemed to come on the breeze,
Like the rippling of waves with the rustling of trees,

And my soul caught the sense ere my ear caught the sound,
As it welled from the depths of the caverns profound,
Where the fathers of men live in temples of stone,
And in clusters await at the foot of the throne
Of the god, whose domain swallows down to their doom
Every chosen one marked for a battle-field tomb,
Who instead of a death in the dash of the fray
By the brand of the traitor is brushed from the way
Of his destiny's route. Then the voice said to me :
'On the morrow the hand of a craven will be
In swift madness upraised 'gainst the gods' own elect.
If the victim expires, from your young men select
Out the hunters most fitted to follow a trail,
And hunt down the offender. Beware, if you fail,
For the fated young brave will be chained as a slave
Till his slayer shall sleep in an untimely grave.'
Then no more did I hear, though I stayed till the stars
Fled away, when the sun flashed above the mist-bars.
One has died, not in war, but by treacherous hand.
His cold body is here in the midst of your band,
But his soul—Ah ! my men, shall we let that remain ?—
List ! I fancy I hear the sharp clank of his chain !
Shall we let him remain in his dungeon below ?
I can feel your hearts throbbing the answer, 'No, no !'
Then I charge you by all you hold sacred and dear
That you search out the slayer and slaughter him here.
Search him out over river, and mountain, and plain,—
Nor the lines of the fort let your ardor restrain,
For the stockaded walls often shelter the knave,—
And then send down his spirit to ransom the brave,
Who in anguish and sorrow mourns now for release.
Break his chains and he'll soar to the realms of peace.
What, my mates ? Did you hear ? Someone saw the deed
done.

Someone saw the fell blow that has settled the sun
Of as brave a young warrior as ever drew breath ;
So there only remains to encompass the death

Of the culprit—a Briton, a dog, and a slave.
We shall burn up his body and so cheat his grave.
We shall burn up his body and torture his soul,
That the demons may gloat on the groans that shall roll
From his throat, as on corn in the full of the ear.
Gather wood, make a fire, we shall torture him here.
Gather wood ere I go, make a fire when I'm gone.
To the French in the fort I will now hie me on
To demand and receive both for profit and pleasure
Such a meed for your worth, for the dead such a treasure,
That the night may be spent in the dance and the song
With the victim aflame in the midst of the throng."

V.

The dull lamps threw a dismal lurid glow
Athwart the precincts of the gloomy, low,
Log-raftered room, as 'neath the doorway bent
The Indian chief, the while his keen eyes sent
Inquiring glances on the assembled group.
The voice, accustomed to resound the whoop
Of battle, till the forest rang again
With blood-cries, tuned itself to milder strain,
And in insinuating way began
As thus :

"I pray you heed an untaught man,
And pardon aught his uncouth tongue may say,
That travels not the white man's beaten way.
The Indian reads not books like yours for lore,
But loves to read and gravely ponder o'er
The cloud, the sky, the stream, the swamp, the glade,
The midday sunshine and the midnight shade.

He learns to understand the north wind's cry,
And knows the language of the summer's sigh ;
But when the house-walls crowd around his speech
His thoughts grow turbid, and he cannot reach
The words he fain would place upon his tongue."
He raised his voice, tossed back his hair, and swung
His right arm with a long and graceful sweep,
While in his eyes the savage-fire shone deep,
And welling up, a fountain-flame, leaped out
With hungry fervor : " Oh, ye white men, doubt
Of power to speak takes wing before the hot,
Keen breath of justice, anxious for the lot
To fall upon the proper victim. One
Of our young men outside the fort lies done
To death by him, your captive enemy.
Give up his living body unto me
To-night, and forthwith I will vow that I
And all my tribe will volunteer to die
If needs in your defence, and for your cause.
To fill the measure of religious laws
That man must die, and die to-night by fire.
I ask the boon. Pray grant me my desire."
His voice sonorous ceased, and statuesque
He waited the reply. The weird, grotesque,
And long-limbed shadows waved their mute replies.
In through the window throbbed the stars' pale eyes,
And softened by the distance rose the thrill
Of low-voiced chanting on the outside hill.
"The prisoner is mine," the answer came,
"And, far as I can learn, is free from blame,

Go back, bear off that corpse, and bury him
In some wild forest-corner, dank and dim,
Some spot beseeeming for a traitor's grave,
Whence night ne'er lifts and owlets ever rave."
The Indian's answer hissed back, anger-born,
Through lips drawn rigid by unbridled scorn :
"Through storms of winter, storms of blood and death,
We've fought and cheered with ever-faithful breath
For France, and Indian blood has flowed adown
The leafy blankets of the hillside brown
In many a crimson rill to your behoof,
And now with icy brow you stand aloof
And toss the brand of traitor on our dead.
Beware, lest vengeance light upon your head !"
He turned away with gesture plumed with pride,
And passed with long and haughty, silent stride
Into the night and out upon the slope,
Where crouched the braves in fierce, expectant hope
Of feast of blood, while far the heaped-up fire
Licked out its thousand tongues in hot desire.

VI.

The light glared high, until a rosy hue
Blushed o'er the night-sky's robes of dusky blue.
Anon a glimpse of lake would flash and glow
And fade afar upon the river's flow.
Now down in caverns, fathomless of shade,
The light-tides vanished in the cedar glade ;
And now the maples, and the bearded firs,
The nodding poplars, and the junipers,

Charged into view and then drew back again
As columns on a clouded battle-plain.
The chief with gliding motion took his place.
With furtive glance on upturned fire-lit face,
And ear alert and strained to catch each word,
The warriors awaited till they heard
His message, which bridged o'er the silence to
The fort, and like a trumpet, pealing through
A tourney-court defiant strains, each note
Flung venomed vengeance at the foeman's throat.
"An alien race of men within those walls
Treat with contempt our claims, when justice calls
On them to grant us but our bounden due.
Poor fools! My children, were it not for you
The wolves ere now had battered on their blood,
Or else its flow had soiled the crystal flood
Of lake and stream with taint unholy. We,
The owners of the land, untrammelled, free
As air, or rushing water, beast, or bird,
Have hovered over them with act and word
To shield them 'gainst the angry British hand.
Unless they yield the captive, we the land
Will yield, and them with it unto the foe.
This night unto the British we will go
And swear allegiance to them, then return
And every Frenchman's cry for pity spurn."
He stopped to catch his breath, but ere again
He spake another voice took up the strain
In higher key, and wilder, madder way :
"If you are truly brave you'll rise and slay

The marl-faced mob !”

The speaker climbed upon
A fallen pine, and as the light shone on
Her features, Lee soon recognized the maid,
Whose love-lorn anguish he had seen displayed
By song and gesture ; the pursuer too
Who'd fiercely headed on the cry and hue
That very day.

“ Instead of sitting, rise,
Ring out your battle-whoops unto the skies,
And wash your hands in blood so that the stain
Of cowardice no longer will remain
Thereon. Yea, cowardice, I say again,
For those who hesitate are cowards all.
The brave man's motto is to rise or fall,
To win or die, and take no middle course.
Your path is up the rugged steep of force
Unto the winning goal. Before you, dead,
Lies one whose footsteps ever forged ahead
At duty's call, at danger's luring voice.
The winding forest pathways did rejoice
To feel his footfalls on their leafy sides ;
The blooming flower-groups blushed like modest brides
At his approach. The buoyant north wind bore
His hunter-shouts triumphant gaily o'er
The hill-tops rocky of the lake's far shore,
And on the thunder's wings his battle-cries
With martial music thrilled the morning skies.
I saw him fall in death's e'er-waiting arms,
Awoke the forest with my wild alarms,

Beheld him lie beyond my reach to save,
And strove to bring his slayer to a grave
Befitting his deserts, but failed, and now
Before his corpse I ask you all to vow
Instant revenge. What! Do you hesitate?
An answer, quick! There is no time to wait.
Ah, silent, all! Then cursèd be your fate!"
She ran along the tree and leaped into
The fiery fount of flame, that upward threw
A scintillating shower toward the sky,
And died as wildwood maids were wont to die
When hope was dead, and love was buried deep
Within the graveyard of unending sleep.

VII.

The fire burned low. The crowd the corpses twain
Had borne away in solemn funeral train,
And forest noises all unheard by day
Ran through the leafy corridors in play,
As night-birds, roosting all the daylong light,
Sing soft-voiced serenades throughout the night.
Lee at his window saw the sentry-shades
In silent motion circling the stockades,
And knew that all the force lay on their arms,
Prepared to spring at sentinel-alarms.
He heard the screech-owl calling to his mate,
The far-off barking of the wolf belate,
The waves' sad ripple on the nearward shore,
The twinkling brooklet gaily dancing o'er

The undulating boulders, and the low
Breath of the whisp'ring gallery below
The giant-arching trees, hid in the gloom.
"The besom of destruction findeth room,"
He muttered, "everywhere to work its will.
Within the lonely forest, drear and chill,
A thousand hands await to grasp its arm.
The dreamy wind— Ah!" Up in sharp alarm
He sprang, and heard a mystic voice intone
In slow notes, modulating to a moan,
A dreary recitative of the woes
The day had brought, and at the plaintive close
A threat of war, of war unto the knife,
Unless the captive paid with life for life.
The strange voice, pitched in strangely solemn key,
Played on his nerves till morbid imagery
Usurped the sceptre swayed by healthy sense.
Sometimes the voice seemed coming from the dense
Black foliage beyond the smould'ring coal;
Then from the air, as if a floating soul
On wings of night gave disembodied plaint
In ghostly accents, such as fancies paint
When hot delirium prowls, fever-led,
Through charnel-houses filled with mould'ring dead.
A gruff French speaker on the plateau near
Growled, loud enough to catch Lee's troubled ear:
"A pretty march we'll lead unless we give
The captive up to them. Now as I live
I swear if I'd authority, as will,
I'd toss him out to keep the mad wolves still,

First thing you know, like freshet after thaw,
They'll flood us round. I'd rather dare the maw
Of lynx or bear than 'counter Indian law.
The Indian mind will soar to mounts of crime,
Or sink to deepest depths of moral grime
To seek redress for what their code may deem
Injustice. They, uncertain as the beam
Of April sun, will veer from friend to foe,
Mere weather-cocks unto the winds, that blow
Adverse or fair according to their sight.
To-day they'd fight for us, but now to-night
They'd drain our life-sap to the very core.
The threats have ceased; the danger's not yet o'er.
When noisy boasts have ceased, look out for deeds.
Ere dawn has doffed the midnight's murky weeds
Beware, or English shouts and Indian cries,
May mount together to the startled skies.
I'd rather far the Englishman was dead
Than harm should hover round your daughter's head."
"My daughter's safety's dear to me indeed,
But how 'twould make a Frenchman's honor bleed
To bend it down before a savage claim!
The man is food for praise and not for blame.
My daughter says he saved her from the foe,
So I'll protect him far as life can go."
"I thank you for that word," then Lee spake out,
"But if within your heart there lurks a doubt
Of danger unto her from shelt'ring me,
I'd rather suffer death than think that she

Was placed in aught of peril for my sake ! ”
“ The savage on thy blood shall never slake
His heathen thirst with my consent, although
Thou art of France hereditary foe.
If thou didst hear my comrade’s words, forget !
Sad way for me ’twould be to pay the debt
I owe to thee if I were willing to
Surrender thee unto that howling crew !
Retire to rest and lose in sleep the night.
Thy slumber heavy and thy dreams be light ! ”

VIII.

The night moved on. The bale-fire’s dismal glow
With melancholy weakness flickered low,
And, save the water-swell against the shore,
The nameless echoes rising evermore
From mystic bush-chords tuned to peaceful strain,
The hush of death caressed the viewless plain.
Our hero leaned against the window-sill,
And let his thoughts run riot at their will ;
Built airy palaces, then wrenched then down,
Frowned at his fervor, then smiled at his frown.
“ A very fool am I, indeed,” he said,
“ To dream that I a Frenchman’s child might wed.
’Twas but a dream. I now am wide awake.
Again she sings. My heart bounds like to break ! ”

Song.

Home of the beautiful, France the fair,
Far away from thy loving care,
Motherless, sisterless, brotherless, I
Long for thee as the days go by—
Days of sorrow and mental throe,
Mournfully draped in weeds of woe,
Days of dolor and days of dread,
Drawing me nearer unto my dead.

Mother, indeed, it was well you died
Ere they fell afar from your side—
Sunny-hearted, loving boys,
Songs of blessings and harps of joys—
Ere they fell by the foeman's hand
Dead in the wilds of a distant land,
Fighting as Frenchmen ever fight,
Strong for country and staunch for right.

Leo, the first of the boys to go,
Fell like a hero, charging the foe.
Merry, happy, whistling lad,
Playing, romping, never sad,
He's at rest in a lonely grave
Out in the west, where the willows wave
Over the Nottawasaga's flood,
Crimson-tinged with Huron blood.

Then most promising one of all,
Broad and powerful, straight and tall,
Somewhere out in the Iroquois land
Sleeps beneath the desert sand.

Last, my favorite playmate won
Fame and death when the deed was done
That secured to the *fleur-de-lis*
All the land to the sundown sea.

Father, I trust you'll long be spared,
You, who have many a danger dared;
But you'll die, as you live, upright,
England's foe and a true French knight.
Home of the beautiful, France the fair,
Far away from thy loving care,
Motherless, sisterless, brotherless, I
Long for thee as the days go by.

The shadow-voices of the mist-wrapped vale
Dreamed drowsy echoes, which stole from their pale
Wan curtains—rose like water-birds on low
Swift-guiding wings, then dropped again below
The vap'rous folds and sadly ceased to be.
Long, long into the sombre mystery
Of nature's night the Englishman gazed down,
And gazing on with deeply graven frown
Athwart his brow, he fancied that he peered
Into his own soul's midnight, which upreared
Before his eyes a symbol'd parchment, chained
And barred against his ken. There he remained
Until the cold lash of a fleeting shower
Wiped from his brow the spell-web of the hour,
And he retired to rest if not to sleep,
Determined evermore his love to keep
For Britain, while for France the seeds of hate
He'd sow with eager hands both long and late.

IX.

No sooner had he dropped upon his couch
Than every instinct in him seemed to vouch
That dangers swarmed like bees about his head.
He hesitated, rose again in dread
That some surprise might fiercely pounce upon
Him sleeping, as the crafty fox steals on
Its slumb'ring prey, and from the darkened room
Peered out into the night's scarce fainter gloom.
The measured cadence of the water played
Its mazy, waltz-like music in the shade,
As serenading some immortal maid
That, bowered in vapor, vision-raptured lay
Within the palace of a leaf-walled bay.
The solemn solitude with trance like stare
Loomed up before his vision everywhere,
With vague, chaotic depths within its glance.
The clustered constellations seemed to dance
Round black-palled cloud-biers slowly passing by
The bright-roofed archway of the midnight sky.
No other sound— Yes, other sound was heard
Than water-pulses. List! A flute-tongued bird
Trilled sadly out a soft pathetic lay
Intensified with longing for the day,
The time of golden phantasies and joy.
Another sound, like sailor's far ahoy

O'er tranquil seas, hung trembling on the air.
A distant whoop, and something like the blare
Of warlike bugle, then came wing to wing
Across the marshes with a startling ring.
Short, sharp commands of caution, passing round
The stockade's and the rampart's sentry-bound,
Told Lee the garrison was on the guard,
Alert their lives and liberty to ward
Against the forest-fiends for blood gone mad.
Noise after noise, wild, melancholy, sad,
Came up from river, down from rocky hill,
And 'cross the meadow with a ghostly thrill
That made the hearer's flesh creep round his bones.
By times the vales would echo hollow moans,
The heights were voiced with shrill discordant tones,
And every hill and dell seemed peopled by
Unnumbered beasts and birds in full outcry.

Song.

"To the gods of the air
And the gods of the stream,
To the gods that declare
Where the sunlight shall stream,
To the gods of the thunder,
The gods of the rain,
And the gods that rule under
The infinite main,
We pray for assistance,
And pray for it now,
Overcome all resistance—
Our homage we vow !

Ye gods of the air,
Brush our foes from the land!
And ye water gods, spare
Neither tempest nor brand!
Ye gods of the light,
Dash them down into gloom!
And ye gods of the night,
Hurl them down to their doom!
Ye gods of the thunder,
That shake the great earth,
From the cataract under
Come out to full birth.
Help the gods of the rain,
Sweep them out on their breath,
So the gods of the main
May endow them with death."

The savage invocation ceased, and then
In dismal accents from the darkest glen
Uprose, in chorused voices, the reply
From tricky wizards, that the gods were nigh.

CHORUS.

"The gods of the air are we,
And we are the gods of the stream;
The gods of the thunder, we,
That ride on the lightning gleam.
The gods of the lake and sea,
We answer to your prayer:
We come from the ends of the world
To cater to your care."

"Unless you stop this nonsense and retire,
I'll give the order for the guns to fire
Into your howling ranks," a Frenchman cried,
"And then your gods will topple from their pride.
Men, to the guns! Now fire one shot to quell
The magic of their incantation's spell."
Boom went the gun, and booming rolls resounded
The while the distant hills cried out astounded,
But when the echoes died the night grew still,
Nor man nor spirit spake from vale or hill,
And till the dawn poured down its welcome light
No further sound disturbed the sleeping night.

X.

The noon's blue splendor, fathomless and fair,
Smiled warmly on the objects of its care—
The forest lawn—the flower-dell glory-hued—
The scarlet tanager's, the robin's brood—
The antlered deer in copse-clad dingle deep—
The bodeful shadows where the beavers sleep—
The glossy birches and the gloomy pines—
The gorgeous orchids and the clinging vines—
Full-fruited boughs with silvery, shivering leaves—
The starry flower-flush from the dappled eaves
Of tawny-tinted rocks, the altar-flame
Of blue and purple dashes, which upcame
From altars dedicated by the flowers,
Which sipped their beauty from the noontide hours—
All these and many more with myriad eyes
Reflected back the gladness of the skies,

As Lee strolled down his wonted walk alone
Unto the three-treed group and wave-dashed stone.
A dusky otter by a leaf-paved pool
Sunned his brown head the while the waters cool
With fondling touch smoothed down his silky fur,
A picture pure of comfort, free from blur.
A group of squaws, dirt well personified,
A rude sketch furnished from a contrast's side,
Showed misery in full abasement drawn,
A stain of evil on the sculptured lawn,
An ink-blot on an else unblemished page.
"Oh," called a voice, "your sorrows I'll assuage.
You look as if your day had set in night.
The night is past. I bring the tidings bright
That will disperse the gloom, dissolve the cloud.
This very afternoon you'll be allowed
To flit like bird of passage past the lines,
Beyond that azure-tinted tuft of pines,
To where the red-coats camp in war array.
You tremble—start—the truth is as I say.
I come to tell you to prepare to go."
With light-winged laugh his joyous-tempered foe
Repeated o'er his tidings.

"Thanks to you

For news the best that man can open to
His fellowman! Like uncaged bird I'll wing
My eager flight to where the bugles ring
Britannia's stirring strains, and standards bear
The proud red cross of Britain on the air."

He turned him from the water-gleaming plain,
Walked slowly up a track 'tween rocklets twain,
And stood before a mound, sod-paved, and sere
As yet from the transplanting touch. A tear
Welled out from either eye as he drew near
His comrade's grave, and plucked with tender care
A little faded flower that blossomed there;
Then with a mute and sorrowful adieu
Back from the solitary spot withdrew.

XI.

'Mid whisp'ring reeds and branches weeping bowed
Of bathing trees, a boat its passage plowed
With shallow furrow out upon the lake.
The furrow-ripples trailing in its wake
Seemed pointing out to Lee a white-robed girl
Upon the shore, just where the eddies curl
And bubble out into a silver crown
To hide the rudeness of the rocks' rough frown.
"Cold-hearted girl," his bitter thoughts communed,
"She watches me away with eyes scorn-tuned
To tension's strain."

She stood in attitude
Unchanging till the furrow's amplitude
Was lost in breadth and vision overgrown
At length.

"Ah, maiden with the heart of stone,
I'll waste on thee no parting sigh. Farewell!"
Then creeping out with softly-rounded swell

A woody headland hid the fort from view.
Two long and lank-limbed hunters fleetly drew
The painted bow across the lake's fair throat,
And faltered not until the fragile boat
Ran moose-like 'mong the leaves and lily-pads
That fringed a reeded shore. Red-coated lads
With joyous shouts ran down the sliding sands
And grasped with fervor both his waiting hands,
While to his eyes the hot tears flooded fast
As once again he saw his loved flag cast
Its haughty folds unto the landward breeze,
The colors flaming o'er the sombre trees.

XII.

The eventide with rapid burr etched in
Broad lines of shadow, far across the thin
Frail ghosts of sunset smiles that wandered lost
Between the long, low clouds with gold embossed,
And new-born vapors, rising, dun and cool,
From weedy marsh-bed and from bubbling pool.
Lee watched the mossy hillocks joining hands,
Their green waists girding with long, lapping bands
Of ribbon-shadows, coiling from their skeins.
The mountains seemed to bend unto the plains ;
The plains to swell responsive answer back ;
Then somewhere down a balsam-girded track
A sweet voice sang of love, requited love.
The music-undulations played above
His head, and circled round his heart until

Its impulse fluttered with a pain-edged thrill,
And rushing off he ran into his tent
To 'scape the rankling charm. He vaguely bent
His head upon his chest, his hand fell at
His side and felt a folded paper, that
Peeped from his pocket, eager to be read.
He held it up and this was what it said :
"I heard this morn that you exchanged would be
Before the sunset had bloomed on the lea,
And, to my sad surprise, I found that I,
Despite each impulse and each purpose high,
Could not restrain a foolish tear. Therefore
I write—(for now I know that nevermore
We'll meet again ; that circumstances wide
And deep as any grave will so betide
That death itself could not be greater bar)—
To beg your kindly thoughts when I'm afar,
And ask your pardon for each cruel word,
Each thoughtless deed, that may perchance have stirred
With venom'd sting your brain. Had you been French—
The Mother knows 'twill tear my heart to wrench
Your image thence ! Mayhap I'll let it stay.
God bless you ! Through my life I'll nightly pray
For happiness to shower upon your life
Her choicest fruits. I trust a loving wife—
Nay, why need any further word be said ?
We two are to each other henceforth 'dead.'
He read, turned pale, then reddened like a rose,
And whispered breathlessly, "God knows—He knows."

CANTO THE FIFTH.

I.

THE dawn's sky-tinted cheeks waved blushes down
Upon the shore's gray kirtle and the brown
Colossal mass of forest-tufted stone,—
A castellated rampart, with a zone
Of liquid pearl inlaid in blue and gold,—
Transforming gray to silver, and the bold
Bronze-brown to auburn rich as maiden's hair
Borne buoyant on the breeze, through which the glare
Of loving sunbeams shone as through a net,
That flit'ring held its flecks of glory set
Upon its meshes. Down among the deep
And drowsy shadows, waking from their sleep,
Odd lines of gloom in snake-like curvings twined,
And, guided by the mischief-haunted wind,
Black-letter rhymes wrote on an azure scroll,
Which wound and wound in never-ending roll
The river-clasping haze, that tried the skill
And knit the beetling brows of a bluff hill
Upon the distant shore to catch the flow
Of rhythmic fervor, gurgling soft and low

From rills of summer song. The bushy locks
Of bosky isles, that swarmed in wayward flocks
Along the water-road, seemed capping heads
Of giant sleepers couched in liquid beds,
Or sturdy bathers floating in the surf
Where dashing waters met the steadfast turf.
The sombre wilderness o'erbent the stream,
And lapped with many-pointed tongue the gleam
That varnished o'er the glass-clear pavement blue
With love's caress. Anon the shadows flew
In frightened flocks to hidden haunts away,
As high and higher soared the god of day.
Then end to end the black-writ scroll he rent
In twain, afar its fragile fragments sent
With tossing wand, and spread to open gaze
The wide St. Lawrence, flashing with the blaze
Of countless sun-fires dancing on its waves,
And scaring off to echo-haunted caves
Beneath the hydra-headed rocks the birds
Of night. Belated wolves in blinking herds
Gazed at the iris-dyed and flaming gleam,
The colored phantasy of sky and stream,
The boundless imag'ry of plummy mist,
The crystal crestings of the erstwhile trist
And gloomy hills, then slunk to coverts gray
To taste dream-echoes of their night-tide play.
A drowsy sentinel, that paced his beat
With sullen heart and heavy, listless feet
On through the dreary void before the day,
Greeted with joy the first uncertain ray,

Prophetic of the dawn. And when the glow
Of morning's op'ning flower in perfect blow
Burst on his sight, his grim mood mellowed down
To cheerful thought, and on his face the frown
Became transfigured to a smile.

“Thank God

For light!” he said. “The night's a chast'ning rod
Unto the weary guard. Through irksome hours
I've felt the presence of uncanny powers
On every hand. The midnight forest, vague,
Impenetrable, fathomless, a plague
That threatened to unchain its deadly curse ;
The water-ripple's ever-sobbing verse,
That beat its melody in dreary moans
Upon the gamut of the storm-hewn stones ;
The loon's lone cry ; the wolf's ear-stabbing bark ;
The shooting star that hissed past through the dark,
Like fiery serpent darting venom'd sting
Against its victim ; e'en the lazy swing
Of thong-tied boat against the shelving shore,—
All seemed to throw fear's foolish fetters o'er
My struggling brain, till fully chained I stood
A trembling coward. Yea, if proved I would
Have heaped disgrace upon my father's fame,
And smirched the brave old soldier's stainless name.
What, ho ! A sail ! Another, white and far,
Sits like a bird upon the dawning's bar !
Still more ! As dead hands beck'ning o'er the waste
Of years, their presence seems more due to taste
Of thought impalpable, than eye-sight strained
To leap the water-maze. Now some have gained

A firmer foothold on the wrinkling sea,
And seem with confidence to spread more free
Their growing wings. What nationality
Is stamped upon their prow? Dark rumors say
A powerful British fleet its hostile way
Is tacking up the river-blending tide —
May foul misfortune o'er its decks preside!
Soldiers, awake! A flock of wild birds wing
Their nearward flight. Mayhap the song they'll sing
Will palpitate the hearts of throbbing hills
With key-notes piped from iron-moulded bills!"

II.

Fleet-limbed and garbed with nature's richest wealth,
The crown of youth, the royal robe of health,
Responsive to the call a Frenchman came,
His eyes aglow with patriotic flame.
One sweeping glance he cast o'er flood and fell
From vantage point upon a rocky swell,
And sketched with fevered haste upon his brain
The brilliant pageantry of sky and plain,—
The smould'ring sun upon his couch of gold,—
The scarlet canopy that upward rolled
In tent-like folds its filmy mist-warp fine
Above the molten-orb, the border-line
'Twixt earth and sky in purple splendor veiled,
Through which the broad-winged warships swiftly sailed
Into the full-gemmed day.

"Ah, Frenchmen, comes
The song of glory to the roll of drums!

The hand of fate will pour down honor's meeds
Upon the heroes of the mighty deeds
The advent of this alien fleet foreshades.
It must be English! Storm-winds' fierce tirades,
And hidden perils of an unknown stream,
It scorns. 'Tis certain now! The hated gleam
Of England's flag, a blood-shot thing, I see!
No time to lose. The herald I will be
To brave Montcalm of Britain's haughty fleet.
Perchance the time has come when I shall meet
The wave of fortune on its upward flow.
Ho! Bring my horse. This instant I must go
To spread the tidings of the coming foe."
He hurried o'er the rough storm-chiselled stones
That paved his pathway, while the vibrant tones
Of wind-song chased him through the rocky gate
That oped upon the woodland garden great.
A moment more and on his eager steed
He dashed adown a trail with reckless speed
Into the forest's dim cathedral aisles,
Where gloom abysmal with its gruesome smiles
And mystic arms becked onward to its heart.
He felt within his breast the spurring dart
Of high ambition, fiery-tipped and keen,
And love's alluring star with dazzling sheen
Danced on before.
"Oh, life's a tuneful string,
And war's the hand to make its music ring!"
He shouted as he went, his long black locks
Like streaming plumes outspread. O'er flinty rocks

That sparkled 'neath the steed's fast spurning strides,
O'er soft leaf carpets on the mossy sides
Of marshy sloughs, with rhythm dull and dead
As muffled drum-beats from each iron tread,
Right fast and far he rode. Anon the great
And glory-tinted blue in boundless state,
The nest of starry night-birds, arched above
And hid the warblers, chanting lays of love
As pure as prayers washed by the angels' tears,
As old as earth, as endless as the years.
Anon the low bough-bending, leafy screen
Twined o'er him with its wealth of emerald sheen,
That fondled 'neath its branch-embracing powers
The puny songsters of the summer hours.
Thus on through shade and shine, through bush and brake,
His coal-black steed, with foamy flake on flake,
Like giant snow-balls, streaming from its lips,
Dashed up the grades and through the flowery dips
Between, until it came upon a row
Of tents, outstretching like a bended bow,
Upon the lawn-lined footstool of a hill
That reared its granite forehead grim and chill
Above the forest bosom, sweet and warm,
With zephyrs mantling round its spicy form.

III.

The trailing purple of a heart-cleft vine
Hung from a chestnut in a tangled line,
Coquetting with the dark-flowered silk-weed soft,
Luxuriously reclining on a croft
Of snake-roots, hare-bells, Indian-pipe, and flags,
Anear a hoary forest-house with rags
Of sere leaves hanging from its rafters, brown,
Gnarled, knotty, rough, and rudely bending down,
With moss-grown elbows jolting from its walls
The peeping shipmunks with their jarring calls,
That sprang from purslane shades or hone-wort halls.
A sylvan nest or home it was indeed,
Surrounded plenteously with flower and weed—
The flower a weed, the weed a noble flower !
A black-eyed maiden tripped within this bower,
The cranesbill tramping 'neath her buoyant tread.
A red-winged starling flitted past her head,
A startled marmot stealthily withdrew
Into a hollow log secure from view.
“ I come,” she said in softly plaintive tone,
“ To bid this spot farewell. Here oft alone
Have I breathed out my longings and regrets,
My life's grim sorrows and my grudging debts
To joy's rare store. Upon a smoking steed
A messenger arrived at reckless speed

Within the hour with most unwelcome news,
The coming of the English. Hope infuse
Some fervor into my down-drooping heart !
There was a time when gladness soothed the smart
Of every sting, when all things round me sang
A song of joy, and nature's raptures rang
In perfect unison unto my soul.
What wayward fancies sway with firm control
One's rooted life ! A tiny bird lights on
The outmost sprig, and instantly has gone
The swift sensation through the stalwart tree ;
A foreign stranger passes hurriedly
Athwart one's path and leaves a fadeless shade,
That dances onward up its rugged grade
Before the sight. Lee came and went as comes
The light—the dark—and yet in absence thrums
Upon the harp-strings of my love so deep
And strong I cannot lull away to sleep
The chords unwelcome. Love ? Ah, yes, I love
Him. As the torrent 'neath the ice above
Sweeps on, so sweeps my love below a mask
That trembles from the fell tide's flow. The task
Which warped the fibres of my brain to say
Back to his love-lit eyes the cruel 'Nay,'
Was naught to what 'twill be if e'er again
I'm forced to wound him with the curse of pain.
We nevermore will meet upon this earth—
Why mourn for him ? Of lovers there's no dearth !
He that to-day brought tidings of the foe
Admires me— Ah, who comes ? The step I know."

"So, truant maid," a merry voice rang out,
"I've e'en succeeded in my search. In doubt
Awhile I groped about this wilderness
With fear and tremor, I may well confess,
Lest fairy sprites had spirited away
Your bonny face to join them in their play
In leaf-land palaces. You know I bring
News of a navy that will fiercely ring
Wild war-bells in a storm-resounding chime.
'Tis not the first, 'tis not the second time,
On eve of danger I've confessed to you
The ardent love that helped to bear me through
The din of battle—"

"Nay, you wrong your heart.
Sure unto death, you would not fail your part
From honor's love alone. You're brave, I know,—
Men say you're reckless when you face the foe.
Pray guard yourself from impulse. Do and dare,
As Frenchmen always try to do, whate'er
Is best for France, for dear old France and home.
Your patriotic zeal should be the dome
Of your affections and the buttress too,
The superstructure and foundation true.
My heart I cannot give—"

"Stay, lady, please !

Let autumn tint with gold the forest trees
Before your lips proclaim the final word.
Then will the patriotic fires be stirred,
And love will brighten in the burnished gleam
Of victory. Wait till the glowing dream

Comes true, and triumph's laurel-wreath I lay
In homage at your feet. To guide your way
From this fair paradise, that well doth seem
A dream of beauty in a summer's dream,
I come. The ladies wait like frightened birds
To wing their flight. No reassuring words
Can stay their haste. The bosky camping ground,
The pic-nic gambols, and the joyous sound
Of music o'er the waves from ruby lips,
Where barken shallops glide on fairy trips
Through sheeny calm, and placid lily-bed,
Will be replaced by war's enchanting game,
As crowned with smoke and belted round with flame
The warder grim, Quebec, will rain his blows,
Fierce and invincible upon our foes.
Come on! Come on! The waiting bugle calls.
Good-bye, dame Nature, to your green-clad halls!"
They pushed aside the bushes and were gone.
Then instantly the gleeful sport went on
Again, that always circles round and round,
To mazy music of enchanting sound,—
The heart of nature when mankind's away,
And bird, and beast, and insect join in play.

IV.

For miles o'er roads of turf embowered in green,
O'er roads of corduroy, that bridged between
The distant swamp-bounds, cedar-hedged and dark,
And winding paths led by the axe-blazed bark,
The silent party moved toward Quebec.
On outward way they'd made the woods bedeck
Their wagons and their steeds with branching plumes
Of balmy odor, and with fragrant blooms
Of blue and purple, yellow, red, and white.
The underlying swamps heard their delight,
Mirth-voiced, on merry air-waves overhead,
Float into jungles where the beavers fed
In fastnesses unsoiled by mortal tread.
Now on return anxiety and dread
Benumbed the mirth, and made the laughter dumb.
They knew the rousing bugle and the drum,
Though playing strains of vict'ry or defeat,
Played funeral marches o'er the dying beat
Of friendly hearts as well as hearts of foes,
That vict'ry's circlet hid unnumbered woes.
Through nodding reeds and fern-brakes dusky green
Appeared at last the welcome limpid sheen
Of crystal-footed waves with orange crests,
And cloud-racks mirrored on their heaving breasts.
Upon the sloping sand-fall of the beach,
Above the span-bound of the billows' reach,

A struggling fire puffed clouds of smoke around
A wigwam tinted like the tawny ground,
A rock between the bark hut and the breeze
Was more protection to it than the trees,
Whose weather-beaten limbs, like locks of old,
Were scanty guard against the storms and cold.
A young squaw stood beside the fire engaged
In household duties, while papposes waged
Fierce battle o'er some fish anear the stream.
Upon a bear-skin, basking in the gleam
Of sun and fire, an ancient Indian lay,
And passed in senile dreams the hours away.
The squaw gave smiles of welcome, and the boys
In haste drew off from war's alluring joys
To watch the strangers, who perceived in turn
That blindness did the old man's vision urn,
And touched with pity for his woeful state
Spake kindly words while for a boat in wait.
"I'm very old," his feeble voice began
In answer, "I'm indeed the oldest man
Upon the earth, and can remember things
That otherwise unto the past on wings
Of death had long since gone unto their graves.
I once was strong and at my shout the braves
Rushed into battle and destroyed the foe,
Now like a useless log I've fallen low.
Oh, could my sight come back to me again,
That I might see the sky, the wood, the plain!
Yet, why repine, the soul is never blind!
I still can see my life-time stretch behind

Me like a landscape, rich in gorgeous dyes ;
And lately comes before my mental eyes,
What first I viewed with trembling and with dread,
A vision of the life that looms ahead,—
Not my poor life, for that will soon be o'er,
But what will happen unto stream and shore,
To nations white and red in days to be.
The Indian roamed the country, proud and free,
The native monarch of a great domain.
His triumphs o'er, he'll never rule again.
The Frenchman white is chieftain o'er the land—
The sceptre seems secure within his hand—
But even now I see another race
Dash him aside and take the foremost place.
Beware, you're doomed ! Across the waters come,
To sound of music and to beat of drum,
The white-winged ships of your destroyers strong.
Beware ! Beware ! The time will not be long— ”
“ Enough, enough ! ” the officer broke in.
“ I see a sail. We're off and off to win.
The boat is here. Come on. You're wrong, my friend.
Dream o'er your dream again and change its trend ! ”
The party hurried to the water's side,
But spite their patriotic fire and pride
The old man's ominous forecast a spell
Threw o'er them, which they could not soon dispel.
With favoring breezes on the vessel sped
Around an island, when the lofty head
Surmounted by the fortress came in view,
And as they bounded o'er the billows blue,

Anear the land our heroine beheld
Her father, who, with waving hand upheld,
Gave welcome to them, while Montcalm with grace
Doffed the plumed hat which hid his smiling face.

V.

September's vivid colors fringed the green
Of summer, and the rare transparent sheen
Of early autumn fluttered over hill
And plain. The huge red sun was hanging still
Upon the margin of the day's domain.
The portal columns of the sky-domed fane,
Wherein the lord of day retires to rest,
Were opened wide and waited his behest .
To clang their panels in the face of night,
And veil his slumbers from the star-eyes bright.
Weird shadows lurked beneath the red-browed rocks
That stood, grim warders, wearing emerald locks
Upon the lofty crests above their helms
Of storm-carved stone. The guardians, they, of realms
As boundless as the land, as free as air,
In earth-dowered beauty rich beyond compare.
The ear-benumbing thunders of the fleet
Had fought with wild reverberating beat,
In echo conflict, thunders from the fort,
And wide and far through many a leafy court
The ebbing sound-waves seemed to tremble yet
Around the Indian lodges deeply set
For safety in the pathless mazes dim,
Tree-locked within the forest-fastness grim,

Although the seal of silence rested now
Upon the cannon-mouths. With deep-set prow
Slow-moving through the green-blue heaving roll
Of river-tide, a warship with a soul
Of British courage in its heart of oak
Loomed phantom-like o'er mingled haze and smoke
Mid-stream. On deck a group of men surveyed
The gleaming river and the rocks arrayed
In robes of battle, and with eager eyes
Sought for the armor-flaw, through which the prize
So highly coveted might soon be won.
The molten glories folded o'er the sun,
Then faded out from golden tint to gray,
And ashen, death-hued, soon dissolved away.
The shadows, bolder grown, flung out their wings,
And circled bat-like in wide sweeping rings,
From cloud to mountain and from mount to stream.
The mimic stars reflected back the gleam
Of heaven's jewels from the ebon breast
Of broad St. Lawrence, erst in sun-garb dressed,
And night began her e'er-recurring reign.
"Day's useless light has died away again,"
A gruff voice said, "with harvest as of yore.
Week in and out we've raised a deaf'ning roar
And battered hard our brains against the rock
That, rock-like, heeded not the puny shock.
We've poured out blood like water for the sake
Of home and England, till my fancies quake
In horror at our loss. Can naught be done?"
"Yes," came the answer, "vict'ry can be won!"

VI.

The cannon-storm wore out its rage. The stars
In silent music throbbed upon the bars
Of blue infinitude, which spanned the domes
Of cloud-cathedrals. From the valley homes
Of clustered cedars swelled and sank the tense
Sad murmur of their voices, lost to sense
Of human ears, but heard and answered back,
Well understood, by zephyr sigh, or wrack
Of tempest, ear of bird, or beast, or flower.
The gipsy-splendor of the midnight hour
Shone with the majesty of beauty's night,
The beauty born of black-browed hills, alight
With stars and tongued with silence manifold.
Aware that time was ripe for action bold,
Alert expectancy flashed thrills throughout
Lee's wakeful brain. He knew without a doubt
A crisis was at hand. Wolfe's words had rung
Upon his ears like martial music sung
By choirs triumphant. Hour by hour he stood
Beside the dusky bulwark, watching wood
And hill glide past like clouds, the star-flecked stream
Their sky.

"The past comes to me like a dream
To-night," he whispered to the waves below,
That lapped the vessel in their restless flow ;

The speaker's accents startled those around,
Whose group he'd neared unknown to sight or sound.
"I know it can be won. Hark to my plan.
That frowning height's accessible to man !
This night we'll scale the crags, and meet the foe.
To-morrow's weal, mayhap to-morrow's woe,
Will bless or ban our cause. Keep silent all
About my scheme. Be ready at my call !"
He moved away, and leaned against a mast,
Absorbed in thought, and soon the booming blast
Of cannonade swelled out with tenfold power
Afar adown the stream. The pensive hour
Shrieked out in dread, but to the soldiers' hearts
The vial, that soothes humiliation's smarts,
Poured out abundant hope of choicest meeds,
The fruits of valor for the next day's deeds.
What high-born hopes Wolfe's ardent bosom burned !
For he it was who spake, and speaking turned
Aside communing with himself again.
Did naught but dreams of triumph thrill his brain ?
Or did a subtle something, undefined
And dim, prognosticate unto his mind
That night for him was very near at hand,
A gorgeous sunset o'er a mourning land ?

VI.

The cannon-storm wore out its rage. The stars
In silent music throbbed upon the bars
Of blue infinitude, which spanned the domes
Of cloud-cathedrals. From the valley homes
Of clustered cedars swelled and sank the tense
Sad murmur of their voices, lost to sense
Of human ears, but heard and answered back,
Well understood, by zephyr sigh, or wrack
Of tempest, ear of bird, or beast, or flower.
The gipsy-splendor of the midnight hour
Shone with the majesty of beauty's night,
The beauty born of black-browed hills, alight
With stars and tongued with silence manifold.
Aware that time was ripe for action bold,
Alert expectancy flashed thrills throughout
Lee's wakeful brain. He knew without a doubt
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By choirs triumphant. Hour by hour he stood
Beside the dusky bulwark, watching wood
And hill glide past like clouds, the star-flecked stream
Their sky.

"The past comes to me like a dream
To-night," he whispered to the waves below,
That lapped the vessel in their restless flow ;

“ A vision breathing incense from the flowers
Of woody dells and ferny-mantled bowers,
With living colors blossom-hued and fair
Such as rare maidens twine through raven hair ;
The thrilling pathos of a vanished voice
In haunting echoes, exquisite and choice,
A halo-charm, gives warmth of life to each.
Like to another world, whose boundaries reach
Within the range of telescopic ken,
We see them wafted near to us again
With the enlarging lens of mental glass,
But know the endless chain of hours, that pass
Unceasingly, have borne them back along
The road mankind cannot retrace. Among
My day-dreams—night-dreams—times alive with life,
Agloom with gloom—the ringing din of strife—
The calm of dawn—the very hush of death—
The storm-wrack swirling with its thund’rous breath—
Among them all I feel, I hear, the far
Vibrating tones, that naught can hush or mar,
Though low as bird-trill o’er a land-locked bay
Or forest breath upon a windless day—
Her peerless songs. I love—I love her yet !
And loving once can mortal e’er forget ?
Love is not joy ! Joy ? Love is cark and pain—
A canker-worm I’d tear from out my brain,
If I had power as I have aching will !
To-night we scale yon over-arching hill,
Foot up to hand, with British might and main.
The morrow’s sun shall greet us on the plain

That crowns the crest, and then I'll strive to drown
In cups of glory, emptied beaker down,
The craven love that would unnerve me quite,
A love unworthy Englishman to-night."

VII.

The zig-zag terraces of solemn gloom,
Shade overlaid on shade, still as the tomb,
On star-lit water-cradles, marble-sheened,
Rocked back and forth and vaguely intervened
'Tween sky and stream. The diamond sky-points snapped
Keen ray-shafts o'er the clouds, that lightly napped
Upon the bed of heaven after play
Through wind-swept, sun-scorched blue the live-long day.
Yet leaning 'gainst the bulwark, gazing now
With upward eyes and now adown the prow
That gashed the undulating liquid line,
Lee's thoughts, in golden phantasies benign,
Dreamed waking dreams of home and childhood dead,
Climbed visionary stairs, that circling led
Up to ambition's throne, ambition's crown ;
And then at thought of love plunged headlong down
Into self-torture, self-intensified.
Vague shapeless spectra, flitting o'er the tide
Like shadow-hearses, filled with phantoms thin,
Mesmeric magic wound his soul within,
And living in another life he saw
The life that death awakes despite the law
Of mortal code. Innumerable things,
Begirt with flowers and with rainbow wings,

In panoramic splendor wreathed around.
Then pantomimic warfare, seeming sound
Itself personified, but all unheard,
Preluded scenes of love. Bird after bird
In brilliant ecstasy of soundless song—
Maid after maid, a heart-bewitching throng—
Joy after joy—hope after hope—each thought
A living form—her eyes with pity fraught,
Her love-lit eyes— A greenish pallor flashed
Before his gaze, and then exploding dashed
In constellated, multi-tinted showers
Of jewelled sparks, that lost their opal powers
And fell in worn-out ashes. Then again
Before him was the water-smiling plain,
The cloud-like mountains and the mount-like clouds.
“Was I asleep?” The outlook from the shrouds
Made answer: “Yes. Awake, the time has come!
Beside us, floating past in silence dumb,
The boats move toward the shore. Haste to embark!”
With cautious movement through the friendly dark
The long procession neared the landing place.
“Who comes?” rang out the blackness-flooded space.
A hush succeeded, eloquent with pain,
And then the river-gloom gave back again
A French reply unto the French demand
That satisfied the guard. They reached the land,
And, muffling softly every footfall, strove
To thread the mazes of the hillside grove
That root and branch held down to aid them up
The rocky steps, as if they knew the cup

Of destiny hung toppling o'er the brim
Of ruin or success, while on the rim
Of their high eery balanced England's cause,
And aided to the limit of their laws
The palm of freedom 'gainst the tyrant's chain.
Fired with an ardor nothing could restrain,
The Highlanders, at home on danger's breast,
Swung up from crag to crag, from crest to crest,
Attained the goal, the watchmen hurled away,
And laid the corner-stone of Canada.

VIII.

The constellated stars grew faint and wan
With watching for the sluggish-waking dawn,
That roused itself at last with languid eyes,
And, shiv'ring, waited for the sun to rise
To warm its pulses, palsy-numbed with cold.
The haze, night-slumb'ring, slowly fold on fold
Uprose from earth arrayed in leaden gray,
Burst from its web before the wand of day,
And spread its cloud-wings, color-flushed, and grand,
To catch the sun-burst deluging the land,
As if to eastward Heaven's gates had raised,
And glory's flood-tide, liberty-amazed,
Had overwhelmed the world. The wide-eyed day
Beheld the British lines in war array
Upon the Plains of Abraham, inured
To conflict, and of victory assured
By faith in Wolfe's clear brain and fearless eyes.
They heard the roll of drums, the brazen cries

Of bugle-throats in leaping echoes dance
The warning wide for French to arm for France,
And soon beheld the mustering masses crowd
In grim battalions, vengeful cloud on cloud,
Before the ramparts of the citadel,
As sky-storms on the far horizon swell,
And range their columns, armed with wind and flame.
Responsive to the thunder-trump's acclaim
The British horns blared forth defiant strain,
And Scottish bag-pipes, blown with gusty main,
Awoke in kilted sons of heath-clad hills
The fiery mountain valor, that o'er-fills
The Highland breast, and, torrent-bounding, lays
The foeman low. The morn wore on, and rays
Of sunshine alternated with the gloom
Of weeping clouds, when marching to their doom
The shouting French charged on the lines of red
That closed the gaps made by the falling dead,
But answered not with musket or with tongue
Till down the waiting line the order rung
To fire. A flash—a roar—a cloud of smoke—
Then surf-like 'gainst a reef the column broke
In bloody spray. Again a flash—a roar—
A British bayonet-rush—and all was o'er!

IX.

The sound of guns had ceased. The smoke-tent gray
Was slowly towed by sluggish winds away,
And left the stricken field exposed to view.
Lee picked with dainty tread his passage through
The life-forsaken casks of clammy clay,
That but an hour before had felt the play
Of fierce ambition's aspirations hot
Within their breasts. He searched for those whose lot
Had left them wrecked upon the shoals of life,
The miserable victims of the strife,
Whose groans in fearsome chorus rose around
The awful precincts of the battle-ground.
On bier of rock with plumes of golden-rod,
Their souls up-summoned to the bar of God,
The soldier-corses lay in warrior-state,
The victors vanquished by the hand of fate ;
The vanquished victors, insomuch as they
Had faced Death's valley and the shadow-way
With hero-hearts, and fell as heroes fall,
Led by their country's flag, their country's call.
O'er mossy swell, through shrub-becrowded vale,
Past flowery coverts, sick at heart and pale
As Death's own harvest, sickle-strown and sere,
He sought the wounded with a manly fear
Of doing aught to make their suffering worse,
While working eagerly for the reverse.

With slipping steps o'er the pine-needle pave
He pushed his way through an umbrageous cave,
Whose leaf-encumbered canopy, aglow
With autumn flush, at distance seemed to flow
With bright-red blood from a black heart of spruce,
And waved a white-bloomed vine as flag of truce
To enemies of whatsoever kind.
He passed the curtained leaves to peer behind,
And then beheld a scene that to his heart
Flashed like a dagger or a venomed dart.

X.

In dreams of beauty, dreams of sunny days,
Of cloudland glories veiled in autumn haze,
Of storm and calm, of summer, winter, spring—
The bird-lore trilled afar on trembling wing—
The even-song of water calm or wild—
The wind-harp's tree-strung music undefiled—
The mountain challenge to the mountain-cloud—
The low marsh-whisper, and the wailing loud
Of frost forerunners—in such dreams as these
The maiden's slumbers toiled o'er nameless seas
And boundless plains in vision-land, bedight
With mirth and sorrow, misery, delight,
Each color-burdened to its utmost fill.
She fancied that she sat upon a hill :
A stunted copse behind, before a grade
Of crisping herbage sinking to the shade
Of bristling shrubs ; a bird-orchestra strong,
A subtle, time-annihilating song

Outpouring like a cataract of joy,
As crystal clear, as stainless of alloy.
At first the buds, both leaf and flower, were sealed
As if the spring-tide had not yet revealed
Its warm, caressing presence, but the flow
Of undulating song-surge seemed to blow
The breath of quick'ning on each sleeping thing.
From bud to bloom, in gorgeous coloring,
The floral jewels wreathed the foliage,
And earnest rivalry appeared to wage
For precedence in color and in form.
Oh, ne'er before in such rare uniform
Had nature's beauties met her wond'ring sight ;
But, puzzling o'er the scene, a gleam of light,
As through a cloud, broke on her 'wildered brain,
And instantly the mazy path grew plain.
The burden of the great bird-song was love,
And by its magic influence above,
Below, and everywhere, had lit the glow
Of beauty's charm excepting in the slow
Chill winter of her undeveloped heart.
Then o'er the rankling of the frosty smart
A soothing balm came when another tone
Than bird-voice, tender, manly, and alone,
Sang out the very sweetest song of all.
Her heart unfolding with a trembling call,
She answered back the well-known English voice,
And sprang to meet sweet love's unbiassed choice.
She saw his form, his face among the flowers,
That fell athwart his way in balmy showers ;

She felt his breath upon her blushing neck—
Ah, coming hopes, how often do you wreck
Like home-bound ships upon the homeside shore!
Another man pushed savagely before
The welcomed one. The music changed to chimes
In clangorous outswell. Her heart betimes
Shrank back from blow to bud, and there stood he,
The French aspirant for that heart, while Lee
Lay lifeless at his feet. She tried to scream,
And trying woke to find it but a dream!
A dream—save that the signal bells now broke
The dawn-hush with their hurried stroke on stroke.

XI.

“A fire-alarm! The fleet has fired the town!”
Her thoughts flew out word-winged. In hurried gown
Attired she hastened out unto the street.
Bad news e’er finds its way on pinions fleet,
And little time was lost before she knew
The reason of the ever-rising hue.
“Arm! Arm! The Britons have attained the height.
Montcalm wants every Frenchman now to fight
As never loyal Frenchman fought before.”
A regiment mustered in before the door
Where she, hand clasped in hand, watched for her sire.
He came, white-haired and stately, with the fire
Of danger’s exultation in his eyes.
“My little girl, my bonny-hearted prize,
I hoped that I had earned the recompense
Of rest, and that I could have taken hence

My patient child to fair old France before
My life was quite worn out. This battle o'er,
I trust the warfare then will soon be done,
And think my guerdon will be fairly won.
Adieu, sweet one ! Nay, wipe those weeping eyes.
Behold the liliated standard proudly rise
And spread its arms out to embrace the breeze !
Pray, love, for France upon your bended knees ! ”
The gentle father stooped and kissed his child ;
The soldier raised his martial head and smiled—
As heroes smile before they cope with death,
Where cannons blast the plains with scourging breath—
And then his white locks shone with argent-gleam
Above the columned rays of bayonet-beam
Adown the street, and through the gate away
To greet the long thin lines in red array.

XII.

With eyes fear-laden, and with lips as white
As moonbeams stealing through the bush at night,
The girl beheld the long procession pass,
A banner heading every martial mass,
While beating drums and music-stirring strains
Preluded out their going o'er the plains,
Victorious before the fight began.
A thrill of fervor through her bosom ran,
Roused by the moving sight, for who can stand
And watch the soldiers of one's native land
March into battle with an unmoved soul ?
Anon she heard the booming cannons roll

Their angry clamor, while the rattling din
Of musketry closed up the gaps within
The tow'ring hills of sound. A sudden pause—
A hush—a query: "What can be the cause?
The craven foes already must have run!
The fight is over and the vict'ry won!
What? Stragglers? More? Oh, can it be a rout?
A frantic horde in mad retreat? No doubt!
The victory is won but not by us!
My country, that the issue should be thus!"
Like to a herd of frightened buffaloes
In blind stampede, the agonizing throes
Of fear whipped back the struggling, cursing throng.
With steadfast gaze she watched them surge along
The narrow street, as cascades force their way
Through snowy glens, chased by the sceptre-sway
Of tyrant Spring, but nowhere could she see
Her father's form. She cried, "God, can it be
That he has fallen?" Then she tried to gain
The rabble-ear with anxious voice; but vain
The attempt—'twas deaf to reason, sense, or sound.
"I'll search him out upon the battle-ground!"
She sobbed, and as the mobbing crowd grew thin
Set out on desp'rate way his side to win.

XIII.

The long black hair flew round her milk-white face
In wild, luxuriant beauty's brilliant grace
As through the gate she passed, and fleetly sped
Toward the harvest of ungarnered dead.
The rude rebuffs of way-retarding stones
She heeded not, and when the heart-heaved moans
Of human anguish smote upon her ears,
She flung aside the burden of her fears
And moved amid the dying and the dead
By one unswerving purpose onward led.
Too sad to tell the sights that she passed by—
Pen cannot paint how wounded soldiers die !
Heart fails in lines of life's hot blood to trace
True-tinted gleams of such a ghastly place !
As led by some protecting power she passed
To where a bush-clump autumn-colors cast
Upon the breeze, and there in what had been
A temple decked in nature's choicest sheen,
And dedicated unto nature's God,
Outstretched upon a pinecone-browning sod
Her white-haired father lay, and o'er him bent
The young French lover, eagerly intent
On binding up his breast. A sunset-glow
Passed o'er the dying features, when below
The branching limbs she stooped and knelt anear
His side. He tried to speak. "Good-bye—my dear—"

A moment faltered, then upon her hand
Placed that of the young soldier—"native—land—"
The low words, spoken on the verge of death,
Just trembled over by an echo's breath
Into this world, as to the ultra-earth
His soul was ushered in immortal birth.
Lee saw, but misconstrued, the hand-sign given,
And felt his inmost heart's love-curtain riven
In twain. He stole away with noiseless tread
Heedless of wounded, heedless of the dead,
Until he stood upon the giddy marge
Of headlong cliffs, himself a victim-targe
Of mental dart-stings keen.

"Oh, Wolfe, you died

To-day in triumph, and the empire wide
Will shout your praises while it mourns your death.
Would that I, too, had breathed my parting breath!
But as I rend this rock and hurl it wide
Into the river's ever-tombing tide,
So from my heart I'll tear the rankling scourge,
And toss it into dank oblivion's surge."

CANTO THE SIXTH.

I.

QUEBEC had fallen and upon its crest—
The lode-star of the French within the West—
The lion-standard waved its victor-flame.
The frost-king from his northern fastness came,
Tossed o'er the earth his robe with graceful hand,
And gambolled restlessly across the land.
The roots and shrubs lay tucked beneath the snow
That, blanket-like, kept up their inner glow,
Till 'neath their leaves, as bird beneath its wing,
Their pulses panted for the coming spring.
The short-houred days, the long-houred nights flew by,
The sun climbed higher in the southern sky,
The snow dissolved, the ice-chains fell away,
And weeping April clasped the hand of May,
That, sparkling out in budding splendor sweet,
Bent in her beauty at the summer's feet.
Oh, summer in this nature-favored land,
Thou art a symbol from the Father's hand,
An emblem of eternal summer-tide !
Thy balmy breezes thrill the forest wide

With blooming joy, while love-eyed flowers untold
Their multi-hued corolla-mouths uphold
To their caress, and e'en the thunder-voice
From fiery lightning-lips seems to rejoice
The landscape face, that, innocent of guile,
Each peal replies to with a beaming smile.

II.

The long, sweet breathing of the summer breeze,
In steady ebb and flow, swept through the trees,
As if somewhere behind the forest-breast
The forest-heart in rhythmic-pulsed unrest
Kept slumber from the bellows-organ vast,
The forest lungs. Oh, when the tempest-blast
Upheaves the forest-throat, what bursting bounds
That heart must make. Like far-off earthquake sounds,
Or roll of thund'rous lake-surf on the shore,
When lashed to rage, man hears its mighty roar,
But has no power to lull its fevered heat.
The noon-tide hours were bending at the feet
Of even, and the slanting sun-rays mocked
The merry shadows, that with arms enlocked
Danced through the glades and dells in mazy time,
Attuned unto their mockery. The rhyme
Of day-round melted into even-song,
A softly pensive glamour shading long,
Inversely, in advance, the night to be,
As autumn leaves forebode the wintry tree.
Upon a tawny by-path, that crept down
By careful steps among the boulders brown

Unto the pebbled beach, alternate shore
And stream, our heroine stood peering o'er
The alder-tufts that thronged the river side,
And keenly tried to pierce the purple-dyed
Far-glow, that shaded amber, gold, and green,
And broke from green to blue in wavy sheen
Mid-current, and to steely gray near land.
A creamy cloud, shaped like a spectre-hand,
Hung o'er the pearly-tinted southern sky,
And seemed to her imaginative eye
To point attenuated fingers at
A filmy cross beyond the vapors that
Enwrapped the world—beyond the moon's gold bars—
Beyond the sky-homes of the throbbing stars—
Beyond the chaos of the vast unknown—
Outside the utmost verge of distance lone—
A halo hanging o'er the great white Throne.
'Twas but a glimpse, than thought tenfold more fleet,
And yet she saw the wounded hands and feet,
The crown of thorns, the spear-thrust in the side,
The God-like form of Him who manlike died,
And for a while her awestruck soul was faint
And thought was dumb. At shrine of many a saint
Within the hallowed shades of cloisters old
Had she outpoured her sorrows manifold,
But ne'er before had God's own hand for her
Held up His Son-crowned cross, the messenger
Of joy eternal in the realms above,
Of hope, of peace, of full redeeming love.

Her heedless eyes disdained the waning light,
The prophet-herald of on-marching night,
And failed to note the silver-gleaming sail
That on the atmospheric farther pale
Toiled like the day-moon on the heaving blue
Through diaphanic gauze of forming dew.
With absent-minded air she slowly turned
From stream of sunset tint to bush inurned
In crescent walls of deeper-gloomng shade,
And passing through a shrub-bedotted glade
Held up her trembling hands to one who came
To meet her—one whose proudly-sounding name
Had been cremated for the love of God,
While from the ashes 'neath its burial sod
Had sprouted up a flower-soul, that won
A saintly title for its work well done.

III.

The great world-warding sentinel, the moon,
Marched through the heavens toward the night-tide's noon.
The wavelets, burnished by its full-faced glow,
Seemed fairies dancing on a field of snow,
Begemmed with jewels till the river's plain
Shone with the glitter of a sun-flushed rain,
That lancing down upon its polished breast
Bestirred its plumage into glad unrest.
A contrast sharp the wooded shores displayed,
Of sombrous shadows interspersed in shade;
A darkened picture of a darkened town,
Where looming pinnacles and towers looked down

In black contempt on blacker streets below,
Still as the dead, and silent as the flow
Of midnight's veins back to the heart of dawn
O'er misty reaches of lone prairie lawn.
Though gloom o'erhung the forest like a tent,
Beneath the tent-like folds through many a rent
Of intricate design the gambol-bent
Moon-brownies brushed the shadow-webs away,
And cleared such places for fantastic play
As best befit their merry-hearted selves.
A perfect paradise for sprightly elves
Was nested 'neath the frowning forest walls,
As gloomy castles hold enchanted halls,
Perfumed by love and beauty, hidden deep
Beneath embattled corridor and keep.
One glory-girdled fay of argentine,
Suspended on its wings of filmy sheen,
Like humming-bird before a nectar-blow,
Touched with its white lips' pure and lovely glow
Two maiden faces, turned with tender eyes
Toward something higher than the moon-lit skies.
One face was young, and both were sweet and fair,
One crowned with black, and one with silver hair.
The spell of beauty brooded all around,
On bubbling runlet and on leafy ground,
On tree-twined arch, on rock-bemantled swell,
On river-reach and garland-flooded dell.
"How sweetly solemn 'tis to worship God
Within the temples fashioned by His rod,

Life, death, and Heaven all seem nearer to
Me here than when I walk in public view
Amid the turmoil of life's busy days.
In wood-locked alleys and by solemn bays
I've roamed alone near nature's very heart
With buoyant ecstasy of soul, apart
From all mankind, and fancied I could hear
The voice of God, melodious and clear,
Float after zephyr wind and mellow break
Of billows, till the silence seemed awake
And resonant with promises of peace
And hope and sorrow's infinite surcease."
Ah, well she ought to know, if mortal knows
God's voice in silence or in tempest-throes !
Born in a castle, rocked in arms of wealth,
She freely offered up to Him her health
And strength and beauty, crossed the seething sea,
And braved the dangers of immensity,
Unfathomed and unknown, for His dear sake.
Oh, man, how often dost thou boasting make
High mention of thy might on flood or fell,
Yet she, and such as she, perchance might tell
Of daring acts which would eclipse thine own,
Unwritten, unrecorded, and unknown
On earth, but shining brighter than the sun
In angel-records of the deeds well done.
In awesome tones the dark-haired maid then told
Of how she fancied she had seen unrolled,
A moment's space, a token from on high.
"Perchance a warning that my time is nigh,

And death is dreadful ! Cruel-fanged alarms
Depict in horror-shades the grisly arms,
The torture-hands that rob the body's peace
And plague the spirit after life's decease,"
She said.

"Nay," was the gentle answer given.
"The time is always nigh, but Christ in heaven
Looks down with pity on each feeble child
That needs His love. His holy guidance mild
Is ever welcome unto those that roam
Without the fold. He gladly welcomes home
The wand'ring ones, and to the feeble feet
Of sorrow, shepherd-like, with comfort meet
He brings relief and joy. Cheer up, sweet one.
That cross, which bore the image of the Son,
Foretells of happiness to come. The death
Thou callest dreadful is but Heaven's breath,
A merciful and painless balm for all
The miseries that hold man's life in thrall."
She ceased, and each with silent gaze looked through
Her soul's fair sky into the far-off blue,
Where moon and stars grow wan and disappear,
Time melts away, eternity draws near.

IV

The camp awoke at morn from dreams disturbed
By warbling songsters, thrilling songs uncurbed
By fear of waking aught upon the earth,
Where all should greet the glory-cradling birth
Of summer dawn. The flowers sparkling vied
With dewy lustre in a loving pride
To make their homes as bright as homes could be,
While humming-bird and honey-loving bee
Buzzed back and forth from fragrant cup to cup
With dainty taste, now softly sipping up
From snow-white walls an atom of delight,
Now rollicking in chambers rich bedight
With rainbow colors, fair as those that glow
Across the arch of heaven, when the low
Clouds ope to let the setting sun peep through
With passion-eyes of summer-tempered hue
The rainy tears, that like a shower of stars
Fall earthward, ruddy as the radiant Mars.
"The birds' example man should profit by.
The bird-praise echoes to the azure sky,
And human praise should rise wherever one
Awakes to find another day begun,
With all its blessings offered at his feet
As wave to willow where the waters meet
The waiting shore. When in the Huron land
I woke at morn, and wandered hand in hand

With Indian girls anear the Huron sea,
The mounting song swells seemed to bear to me
Inspiring words wherewith to pierce the gloom
Of heathen souls, and snatch them from their doom."
The speaker took the younger maiden's hand,
And lightly tripping down the shelving land,
Led by the guidance of the water's gleam,
They reached the margin of the restless stream,
And bade good-morning to its surging tide.
"There was a time I looked with loving pride
Upon the flood untamable. The glow
Of patriotic fervor, like the flow
Of waters masterful, poured o'er my soul,
And on its dazzling splendor's upward-roll
I soared in spirit to ambition's throne.
Now, fatherless, heart-broken and alone,
I watch thee, mine no more ; alas, no more
The heritage of France. Each tow'ring shore
Will henceforth echo uncouth English strains,
And Englishmen will garner all the gains
From harvest-fields sown with the blood of France.
My merry fancies used to sing and dance
Unto the music of the sparkling waves,
As roaming here and there through rocky caves,
And over dizzy paths 'mid aisles of trees,
My hair ablow upon the landward breeze,
I painted mental pictures of the time
When this wild land, so lovely in its prime,
Would reach the climax of its golden noon.
How like a hideous dream—Ah, precious boon,

Were it a dream!—comes back the battle morn—
The peal of tocsin and the blare of horn—
The thunders booming through the clouds of smoke—
The wails of anguish that the conflict woke—
My father's death—the heart-ache and the woe—
The passage through the army of the foe—
The journey up to Montreal to you—
The winter—spring—the hopes that half-mast flew,
Then fluttered down into their charnel-rest—
The summer—autumn—winter—spring—each dressed
In robes of beauty fitting to its state,
For landscape never mourns for mortal's fate—
The dreary voyage down the stream again—
Our very presence here! Like groaning wain
O'er-freighted with its load my weary brain
Cries out against the burden of its grief,
And holds its suppliant arms up for relief."
"Oh, child, our sorrows oft eclipse our joys,
But joy itself unclouded often cloys
Its own keen zest. Whoever knows the wealth
Of mental buoyancy combined with health
Until the clouds of sickness intervene
Dull shadows 'tween their hope-inspiring sheen
And life's rough way? Each God-sent night-shade brings
Augurs of dawning on its dusky wings.
Had Providence desired that France should sway
This region vast He would have cleared the way
For French successes. French reverses show
He in His wisdom would not have it so.

Remember what you saw last night on high.
Light breaks for you ! Within the by-and-by
I hope to meet you in loved France again.
I hope to meet you in the sacred fane
Of home with household benedictions round
Your heart, the voice of childhood, and the sound
Of husband-cheer. Right gladly would I see
Your fond affections in the custody
Of him who comes with us, who goes with you,
To France."

"Another cause for sorrow true,"
The other said. "I've tried to love him, and
Hope when we reach again our native land
That love will come obedient to my call,
And yield its wayward fancies to my thrall.
My father, dying, left me in his care,
And could I love—but love will wander where
It wills to go, while reason lags behind,
And goads with torture one's uneasy mind."
She turned away, for thoughts she would not tell,—
Rebellious thoughts she could not curb or quell,—
Rose like a lava-stream above the verge
Of cratered feeling nothing could submerge.
Her eyes seemed reading manuscript of God—
The scroll spread open His divining rod
Had marked with river, rolling hill, and sky.
She saw but heeded not its imagery ;
Her thoughts were introspective, and her soul,
The autoscript, rose 'fore her like a scroll.

V.

"If this wild river and the wilder glades
That hide and seek among the deepest shades,
And push the red rocks out to let them past,
Could be reconquered I again would cast
My lot into such laudable crusade.
Last night I wavered long, in thought dismayed,
While sitting lonely in the moonlight pale.
I've often dreamed of marching down the vale
Where I was born, and fancied I could see
The people trooping out to welcome me
Returning home with honor crowned and fame,
A soldier blazoned with a hero's name."
The speaker paused and looked from stream to sky,
A red tint gleaming in each full black eye.
From sky to stream he wandered back again,
Where crawling foams upon the liquid plain
In snow-white robes like caterpillars bright,
Bloomed on the surf in butterflies of light.
"The longed-for time has come, and now I can
Return to France and home, a ruined man ;
The cause I championed dead, and yet unborn
The love that I have longed for. Not in scorn
But pity, which is counted kin to love,
Has she received my homage. When above
My head the waving standards led the way
Into the fever-frenzy of the fray,

And earth seemed rocking like a storm-tossed ship,
Her name was ever cradled on my lip,
Her voice upon my ear, and on my life
Her image. Long in unavailing strife
Have I endeavored to unlink the chain
That girdled round my heart until the pain
Became almost unbearable. Are all
Who love bond-servants to a tyrant's thrall
As I have been and am? I pity them
If so, but scorn myself. Who cannot stem
His passions is meet food for scorn and jest.
Who cannot curb the love-tide in his breast
Is but a fool. I feel that I am one.
From dawning's glow until the twilight dun,
Day in, day out, I've sat as in a dream,
And watched the paddles drip a sparkling stream
Of gem-drops, as they moved like tireless wings
And lapped the water into bubbling rings,
That ever mirrored her fair face to me
A thousand-fold, till love-lorn phantasy
Seemed leading me through endless garden-grace
Of matchless flowers, each flower a matchless face.
I'll finish out the idle, bootless tale.
Her guardian o'er the ocean I will sail ;
Build wondrous castles on the crests of waves,
And let them sink into unfathomed graves ;
Walk at her side and sit anear her feet ;
And, when the wind-winged journey is complete,
End the romance by bidding her good-bye,
Without a tender word, without a sigh,

And then retrace my way across the sea,
And live a hunter's life among the free
Wild birds, wild flowers, and men as wild as they,
Who joy in danger and with peril play."

He turned and noted 'mong the dull, green trees
The play of tresses dark upon the breeze,
That skimming swallow-like o'er bush and brake
Shook up the nodding shrubs to make them wake
From drowsy reveries by dew-drops fed.

"The dainty contour of her shapely head
Is like a curling bud-bell just ablow,
And proudly looking up to catch the glow
That decks it out in life's most perfect bloom,
Inhaling love and breathing out perfume."

His strong hands, muscle-knotted, wind-embrowned,
Into a weedy thicket gently wound
Their careful way, past threat'ning thistle-heads,
Where smiling yellows blushing into reds
Showed straying sunbeams crystallized to flowers,
Shy-hearted children of the summer hours.

With dew-besprinkled treasure then he sped
Past mossy-speckled tarns with boyish tread,
Leaped silent shady pools and humming rills,
Dark miry dips 'tween verdure-vested hills,
And while the maidens mused in solemn way
A nosegay nestled in a ferny spray
With formal air was offered unto each.

"These humble flowers are eloquent of speech,
But man's rude ears cannot detect the sound
From such rare lips as wreath their voices round.

I bring them therefore, ladies, unto you,
Their eyes aglitter with soft tears of dew.
Mayhap you can interpret their desires,
When floating past the domes and sun-bathed spires
Of ruddy cliffs, that ever vainly try
To clasp the river rushing fleetly by.
We start at once upon the shining plain
With other guards attendant in our train.
Last night at dusk the boat expectant came.
I saw its sail burn in the sun's last flame,
And watched its course until it reached our cove.
I bade good-bye beyond that ashen grove
Unto the voyagers from Montreal,
Right-faithful sharers in our fight and fall,
And wait to guide you to the British craft.
I'd sooner float upon a driftwood raft
With painted Iroquois to guide me through
The rapids, than with such a motley crew
As ours will be. These awkward English are
A surly race of men. They'd rather mar
Their looks with frowns than bear a smiling face—
An English smile is but a vile grimace!
Last night I tried my best to be polite
Unto their leader, but with manners trite
And answers stale he drove me back into
My shell. A British bull-dog, mettled through
And through with bigot-hatred double-dyed,
He looks on all things French with scornful pride,
While he himself is but a stupid churl.
Ah, ladies, come! I see the sail unfurl

Its white wing like a water-bird between
The mazy tangles of yon clumpage green."

VI.

That British bull-dog, so described—that block
Of island-bigotry, with brows alock
With frowns, and nostrils tense with feelings stern
That underneath his smould'ring will would burn—
Seemed acting well the part ascribed to him,
As back and forth along the river's rim
He walked with hasty, long, impatient stride,
A gleam-alloy of anger and of pride
Illumining his haughty English eyes.
"I would have asked, methinks, had I been wise,
Whom I was sent to meet, for had I known,
A tyrant-monarch on a despot's throne
Could not have forced me to such hateful task.
My perturbation I must strive to mask.
The turmoil of my feelings and the deep
Humiliation of my soul I'll keep
Beyond the range of scornful alien-eyes.
Man may be foolish, and yet act as wise
As if no silly fancies e'er bestrode
The archway of his soul's inmost abode.
They come—Ugh! Watch the antics of the beau!
His oily black head bobbing to and fro
As if his spine were set on wheels and springs,
A puppet jumping when love pulls the strings.
Had I you here upon the sward awhile,
Sword edge to edge, and mocking smile to smile,

I'd make you dance to very different time,
And clash the measures of the music's chime
Upon your brains—that is, if brains you've got!—
Methinks they have not fallen to your lot!
Can woman love, respect, such things as he?
I've heard it said that woman's love is free
To choose or pick as best besuits her aims,
The hope of money, or ambition's games.
Can it be so? Aye, surely it must be,
For true love ne'er can bend respectful knee
To one of nature's evolving shapes
In guise of man, and yet allied to apes.”
This rush of spleen relieved his boiling brain,
As opened valves relieve the steam-bound strain,
And straight and sturdy stood his stalwart frame
As to the water's edge the French folk came.
He felt the blood-tide flowing to his face
When recognition lit for scanty space
Her pallid cheeks up to their olden bloom,
To fade away to corresponding gloom.
Each waited for the other then to speak,
Each saw the blush upon the other's cheek;
But hesitating each, the time sped by.
Each noted something in the other's eye
That, misconstrued, gave bitter pain to both.
The gently rolling vessel, nothing loath,
From loosened moorings gaily shaking free,
Sailed out upon the current toward the sea.

VII.

The yellow-dappled sand, the boulders gray—
The lily pavement glist'ning green and gay
With ornaments of golden-tinted balls—
The pearly floors of labyrinthine halls
O'ershaded by the rank crane-fashioned grass—
The many-colored hues that mellowed pass
Through airy halls unto the river's arms,
There to bloom out with rich transcendent charms,
And over-match the trees and sky they trace—
All dropped behind like laggards in a race,
As curving round a reeded bend the boat
Moved willingly in search of goal remote.
Our heroine's deep eyes, 'neath lids demure
That veiled the beauty of their glances pure,
Saw pine shades bridge the shadows of the hills
As prone trees arch the homes of leaping rills ;
Gnarled oaks o'erbend the lofty clay-slide steeps
With tossing arms in wild, dishevelled heaps,
As if despairing of their power to stand
High sentinels o'er river and o'er land,
While the revolting serfs beneath their sway,
Grim snake-like roots out-crawling from the clay,
Disdained to longer bear a living death,
But held their tendrils out to catch the breath
Of life from nature's free and balmy lips,
With thoughts of naught but present-charming sips

Of pleasure, heedless of results beyond ;
Long sandy swells, bound with a rocky bond,
Up which like forlorn hope against a breach
The serried trees strove evermore to reach
Their dizzy summits, wreathed in fog and smoke.
Such changing sights she saw, and seldom spoke
To those anear on whom she would not look.
The pale nun bent awhile o'er missal-book,
Then raised her soft pathetic eyes to view
The vessel's progress and the vessel's crew.
Well tutored she to watch with patient smile
The faults and foibles, thronging guile on guile,
Of those she moved among in common life.
No voice than hers could better heal a strife
Or soothe a heart by bitter sorrow torn.
Her cross indeed had ne'er been lightly borne,
For wheresoe'er reigned pestilence and woe
Her willing feet had e'er been wont to go,
And all that woman's heart and woman's hand,
Led by the guidance of divine command,
Could do to raise the suffering from sin,
Her heart and hand were competent to win.
The Huron brave, the fiery Iroquois,
The wan pappoose, the squalid, sickly squaw,
Had each in turn been object of her care,
And wondered at her angel-presence rare.
One little taint, e'en to herself unknown,
Had struggled in and nestled all alone,
A wolf, within a fold of virtues chaste.
Indeed, I doubt me not, she had erased

It out with lowly penitence and prayer
Had she but dreamed that it was present there.
Her whole life long she'd heard the British race
Depicted as unfitted for a place
Among the nations of the earth that claim
Exemption from the brand of heathen shame.
Year after year she saw the suffering throes
Inflicted by those sanguinary foes,
Until it seemed that, Englishmen away,
The reign of wickedness would cease its sway.
Small thought for wonder, then, that there should grow
A weed of prejudice among the blow
And bloom of virtues, blossoms meet for Heaven.
Meek soul, the errant germ did only leaven
The beauteous whole with yet more perfect grace,
For o'er the pallor of her pensive face
The glow of self-inflicted chastisement
Would flow, when flood of circumstances sent
A health-wrecked Briton helpless at her feet.
The satisfaction gained was more complete
By nursing such outcast ones up to life
Because 'twas bitter task. Rebelling strife
Within her breast was welcome, wholesome scourge,
That mental chaff from grain was sure to purge.
The young French soldier's criticisms keen,
Though smiled aside, had some effect, I ween,
For soon she let herself with curious eye
O'erscan his features. With resultant sigh
And mute ejaculation for his soul,
Attended with the hope that time would roll

The sullen clouds back from his lurid brows,
She bound herself with conscientious vows
To use all efforts in her power to gain
So vile a sinner from the fiend's domain.
With purpose laudable she whispered low :
" My dear, 'tis said that we should love the foe,
Use well the ones who treat us with despite,
Give gold for dross, for darkness render light.
That man, who bears upon his sin-lined face
The stamp of Satan, is, methinks, in case
Of urgent need. No doubt he's steeped in sin ;
'Twere conquest great his wayward soul to win.
His face so ugly, doubtless seared by crime,
Shows how he has misspent his youthful prime."
" Nay," said the other, with emphatic air,
" You do him wrong. I will not, cannot bear
Such strictures false e'en of admitted foe.
You say he's ugly, but I answer, No !
You say he's wicked ! I believe that he
Is manly, upright, staunch as man can be !"
The last word sounded very like a sob.
A sob it was, for heaving throb on throb
Came others tearing at her heart-strings till
They almost overpowered her utmost will.
Non-plussed the nun turned round in vast amaze,
And viewed the girl with scrutinizing gaze,
Whose face had hardened into mould of peace,
As metals harden when their fervors cease.
" Dear child, God knows I meant no harm," said she,
" But as my words have sounded unto thee

As sentiments of mine ought ne'er to sound,
I thank thee fervently, and trust the wound
That thou didst make will long retain its smart,
And cease not to humiliate my heart."
"I ask your pardon as a suppliant child,"
The low-toned answer came, "My words were wild—
Wild words and cruel I would fain recall—
Forgive me—Sometime I will tell you all!"

VIII.

Hour after hour the moving picture came,
In shadow now, and now in sun-gilt frame—
Came looming up, or spreading leagues away
On wings of vapor or on clouds of spray,
Then vanished past into the length'ning night
That follows in the wake of human sight.
Blue realms of mist and misty realms of cloud,
Blue depths of heaven and depths of purple shroud,
Long, filmy ghosts of thunder-voicing storm,
Frail and attenuated as the form
Of fancied spirit haunting graveyard still,
From skyey terrace canopied the hill,
The forest and the wid'ning water-plain.
The noise of bird-song soon began to wane
Into a sleepy summer noontide drone ;
The wind expired with many a panting moan ;
And heat rays, showering through the atmosphere,
Rebounded back in air waves, shining, clear,
And dazzling to the eye from water-mead ;
Wild, rocky scarp ; the swamps, that loved to bleed

The moisture from the scanty hearts of hills,
And quaff with greed the tiny goblet-rills
That danced with sparkling feet down forest ways ;
And all the wilderness of wild-wood maze.
With shoreward sweep the boat then sought the shade,
Passed 'neath an arch by graceful maples made,
And stranded on a low black, reeded bank,
Where water-loving shrublets, thick and rank,
Disputed passage to the higher ground.
With start abrupt and stalwart-throated sound
The crew trolled out a tameless, lusty lay,
Wild as the river when the west winds play.

Song.

Up! Up! Up! A song of the river we sing!
Up! Up! Up! Of the dash and the quiver,
The roll and the shiver—

A song of the river we sing!
We'll up at the break of the day,
And we'll make the woodland ring,
As we swing our oars in the breakers' spray
That surge o'er the rocks in a bounding way,
And we'll spread our sails to the breezes' sway—

A song of the river we sing!
Up! Up! Up! A song of the river we sing!

Float! Float! Float! A song of the river we sing!
Float! Float! Float! Of the dash and the quiver,
The roll and the shiver—

A song of the river we sing!
Out into the arms of the gale,
That sets the winter awing,

We'll flap the folds of the flying sail,
And scorn the note of the breakers' wail
From foaming lips, like a phantom pale—
A song of the river we sing!
Float! Float! Float! A song of the river we sing!

Hush! Hush! Hush! A song of the river we sing!
Hush! Hush! Hush! Of the dash and the quiver,
The roll and the shiver—

A song of the river we sing
We'll rest on the summer's breast,
Where the woodland echoes ring
With the song of the bird to its mate on the nest,
And glide to the glade for the high-noon rest,
Where the inlet visits, a welcome guest—
A song of the river we sing!
Hush! Hush! Hush! A song of the river we sing!

IX.

To English eyes and ears the sight and sound
Of English singers rousing echoes round
The green arena, flanked with greener trees,
Would doubtless have been potent to appease
Untoward humor of whatever kind;
But to the biased trend of Gallic mind
Barbarians they, who sang barbaric songs,
Which scourged the gentle ear with stinging thongs.
"My nerves at last are spared the jargon curse
Of British bull-dogs howling British verse,"
The Frenchman said, as o'er the leaf-rugs nigh
He led the ladies to a root-knoll dry.
For diverse reasons neither made reply,

But seemed intent on drinking in the scene,
Encoursaged even from the empyrean
By tense-knit boughs of spreading cedrine shade,
A ceil that locked the sun without the glade.
Muskrat abode it was, and otter-home,
Whence keen mosquitoes never cared to roam,
But buzzed incessantly, a busy school,
O'er lessons learned from each foul stagnant pool.
The bogs vibrated with the croak of frogs,
And shy minks peeked above the greasy logs
That, fungi-epauletted, lay in mire,
Slow-tortured by decay's unceasing fire,—
That mire a treach'rous bed, fern-quilted o'er,
But blackness, sin-resembling, at the core.
Within a bayou, on a bright green mat
That lay upon the water, sat a fat
And kingly frog. The bayou's burnished floor
With lily leaf-mats well was covered o'er,
And some were occupied by other frogs ;
But in that kingdom, bounded round by logs
And slimy driftwood, none had such large eyes,
Such an expansive mouth, such aspect wise,
So gruff a voice as he. The very mat
On which he spread his outstretched fore-toes flat
With pompous air, was broader, rounder than
Its mates. Lee, looking, thought—
“That pompous man
Is very like this huge conceited frog.”
The other thought—
“This haughty English dog

Is well exemplified by such a thing."
'Tis always thus. Man evermore will wring
The neck of circumstance to suit himself ;
And each, with sneer sarcastic o'er the pelf
Of mental satisfaction thus attained,
Walked off more pompous for the wealth he'd gained.
A Johnny-jump-up, winking pansy-eyes
Through boggy mazes at the gleaming dyes
Of miasmatic mould-beds, gold and blue,
Though small and modest, met the Sister's view.
With graceful tread she deftly balanced o'er
A waving log unto the trembling floor
Of grass, mud-founded, near her purple quest,
Then bent to pull it from its leafy nest.
A log crashed down upon the tiny flower,
A strong arm grasped her with resistless power,
The trees whirled round, she gave a gasping scream,
Was tossed across the tiny tongue of stream
Into the Frenchman's clasp, and when her brain
Had settled to its wonted course again
She found herself once more aboard the boat,
That 'neath the maples threaded through the throat
Constricted of the leafage-covered creek
Into the open flood. She tried to speak,
But failed at first to make her utterance clear.
"The danger's past. You've nothing now to fear,"
The Frenchman said. "What was the matter, eh ?
A score of rattlesnakes in coiling play
Rolled near your feet. I hear their rattles still !
Vile sounds once heard, methinks, despite the will

Can haunt one's startled ears for many a day.
That English soldier in heroic way
Dashed right into death's very teeth to save
Your body from a sad, untimely grave."
She tried with trembling lips and trembling tongue
To thank him, but the falt'ring accents hung
In incoherent fragments, till he laughed
And said that English soldiers always quaffed
The cup of duty howsoever dread ;
That death was always hanging overhead
Like fruit that waited but perfection's call,
And might perchance at any moment fall
From some slight accident or casual blast.
Then onward down the river did he cast
His watchful eyes. The sail swung to the wind,
And soon the deadly place was left behind.

X.

Upon the zenith-glow of sun-scorched sky
Long fleecy cloud-flocks slowly mounted high,
With bars of azure interspersed between,
Horizon shading into dreamy green,
As if the heavens mocked the mountain-tide
Of ocean anger and of ocean pride.
A ship on fire upon a flaming sea,
With aim unerring firing broadsides free,
The sun steered onward to its harbor home,
Where hints of even swept adown the dome
Of western firmament unto the brim
Of coming nightfall's gorgeous golden rim,

Our heroine with eyes half-closed beheld
The mirage-splendors that the sky upheld,
Until, with eyes half-blinded, she perforce
Cast earthward gaze upon the vessel's course.
Phantasmal beauty spread its yearning wings
O'er landscapes richer than the wealth of kings,
And esplanades of magic seemed to slope
Anear the helms of clouds, with them to cope
In rival tourney, substance *versus* shade.
Rude, unkempt wilderness and mossy glade—
Sun-checked meadow, masquerading hill—
O'erhanging copse and underlying rill—
Deep, leafy lair, lone wind-swept cavern sad—
Rock-climbing pathway—cataract gone mad
And headlong leaping into corpse-like spray—
In alternating form and varied way,
Page after page of nature's book unrolled
Engravings tinted with the manifold
Artistic shading of the Master-hand,
In subtle manner man cannot command.
Anon from savage gorge, notched by the gash
Of earthquake weapon in the battle-crash
Of elements in ages long ago,
With shaggy beetle-brows deep frowning on
The laughing waters, stood great heads of stone,
Within the girdle of a mountain-zone,
In semblance human, as if rudely hewn
From hills volcanic, by volcanoes strewn
From high pedestals, like the gods of eld
From temple niches, where they proudly held

High sovereignty until old Father Time
Played pranks upon them in their early prime.
The trees betimes held up their emerald gates
To let the wand'ring landscapes through ; rare waits,
That tuned their lutes to catch the chords of light,
Arraying them in symphonies of sight.
Rude Indian villages crept into view,
As if they'd struggled dusky jungles through,
And hung upon the barren slopes for air.
Displaying scanty growth and scanty care,
Pale, sickly maze-plots, looking as if throes
Of death would shortly terminate their woes,
In sere pathetic squalor lay between
Soft swells of upland, burnished by the sheen
Of Nature's brilliant verdure, wild and free,
With many a chorus odd and warlike glee
The crew made effort to beguile the hours,
But ere the night's dim, castellated towers
In multitude innumerable crowned
The earth with gloom, the soaring peaks of sound
Had graded down to silence-hearted vales.
The deep-eyed girl had heard the song-told tales
With little heed to harmony or word,
For in her tortured heart a tempest stirred
The portal-pillars of its inmost fane
Until they rocked in agonies of pain,
And something whisp'ring—what she did not know ;
'Twas near yet distant, loud yet very low—
Kept whisp'ring, " Someone else is suffering too ! "
" Our long and toilsome journey's nearly through.

The lights ahead proclaim Quebec in view."
She indistinctly heard as through a blur
Confused, and knew the words addressed to her
But answered not. Then spake another voice,
"We near the goal. Well may your heart rejoice.
The ship is yonder, ready for the seas;
The morning light may bring the longed-for breeze."
She saw it loom upon the dusky night.
It grew in blackness, but her heart grew light,
And all unheeding wondering eyes and ears,
Her movements somewhat blinded by her tears,
She slowly neared him, clasped his hands and cried,
"I come! Am I too late?"

Then Lee replied,
"There is no late this side of Heaven, my dear!"
And hand in hand, each heart devoid of fear,
But full of hope, they sailed away, away,
From realms of darkness into love's bright day.

An Unfinished Prophecy.

I.

THE twilight land toyed with the night
When from the hills with footsteps light
An Indian maiden passed adown
A rugged path o'er boulders brown
Unto the soft gray river sand.
The sweet balsamic breezes fanned
Her bronze-brown cheeks and blue-black hair
With loving wings, and lilies fair
Held up their golden cups to stay
The progress of her paddle's play,
As o'er the quiv'ring ripples she,
With airy grace and gestures free,
Pulled from the beach a bark canoe,
And threaded reedy mazes through
Toward the river's open breast,
That reached away into the west
Till it caressed the after-glow
Of sunset in the distance low,

II.

The river's rippling monotone—
The low-voiced chants of zephyrs lone,
That swung like censers through the halls
By leafage arched, with leafage walls—
The lazy hum of insect song—
All seemed to woo the shades along
The golden rim of eventide,
As back and forth her paddle plied
Through solemn symphonies of gloom
Into the night-enshrouded tomb
Of recent day. The throbbing stars
Rose one by one above the bars
Of dark abysmal to the sea
Of heaven, and the mystery
Of nature's silence robed her round
With garments threaded by the sound
Of marsh-bird's wail, or pine-wood's moan.
At length she turned, and toward the zone
Of blackness, girding round the stream
As lethe coils around a dream,
She swerved the course of the canoe,
And through the grasses, damp with dew,
That held their arms down from the bank
To fondle with the rushes rank,
Propelled its prow against the sand,
And silently sprang to the land.

III.

She pulled aside a maple screen
That curtained off a weird ravine,
And stepped toward a smould'ring flame,
O'er which crouched low an ancient dame
Whose wrinkled face, as leather dry,
Seemed dead, except that either eye
Shone with a fierce, malignant glare,
Like that which lights the wild-cat's lair
When danger pries into its keep.
"Mother, I'm glad you're not asleep,"
The maiden said in awesome way.
"I've dared the dark which follows day,
And paddled up through shade and gloom,
And grim, fantastic shapes that loom
Like giant goblins round the road
That leads to your retired abode."
"You're welcome, child, but never dread
That you'll disturb my sleeping bed,"
The dame's harsh voice made answer soon
"I do not sleep till night-tide's noon
Has gone to meet the dawning day.
All night my tireless fancies play
Unceasing gambols with the gnomes
That chase each other 'neath the domes,
That roof the wild deer's headlong path
When flying from the hunter's wrath.

Why came you here ? Do troubles chase
You from your pillowed resting-place ?
Has love bestowed a heart on you,
And come you here to prove it true ?”
“No heart has love bestowed on me,
But mine has gone, and I to thee
Come in the anguish of my grief
To seek for solace, or relief.
’Tis said that you can lift the screen
That veils the destinies unseen ;
That you can hear unspoken thought ;
Prognosticate the future, fraught
With tangled loads of joy and woe,
And by forewarning fend the blow
The fates are waiting to inflict.
I ask you, mother, to predict
The harvest love will garner me.
Until this summer I was free
And happy as the warbling birds ;
My thoughts ran on in merry words,
As runnels ripple o’er the rocks,
Or careless as my own dark locks,
Which flung their mane to capture gleams
That glanced from sun-bedizened streams.
I watched the braves return one day
From a victorious foray,
And noted, tow’ring o’er the rest,
A chieftain from the outbound west
With eyes of fire and haughty frown.
I met him ere the sun went down

And saw his frown turn to a smile,
And in his eyes the fire the while
Was fanned to fascination sweet.
The Eagle Eye a lover meet
Would be—" "Hist, child, footsteps approach!
Hide till we see who doth encroach
Within the bounds of my domain!
To yonder bush, and there remain
Until I call you forth again!"

IV.

The ancient crone revived the blaze
Until its red, uncertain rays
Crept down the hillside dun, and died
Upon the river's misty tide.
Then by the lurid flick'ring gleams,
That seemed dissolving out in dreams
Among the leafy arcades far,
She caught the glitter of a star
That silver-like shot from its nest
Upon a young brave's stalwart breast,
As up the forest path he came,
Attracted by the pinewood flame.
"Why comest thou?" her voice rang keen
Through shrouded glade and dim ravine.
"I come to pray you'll weave a spell
Whereby the future to foretell.
A chieftain I, in battle skilled,
Full many a foeman I have killed;

I've scalped the locks from many a brow,
And never shirked a task till now.
Through ghostly fogs, o'er leaping brooks,
'Mid slumb'ring snakes in dusky nooks,
O'er sullen lairs and reedy shades,
O'er quiv'ring brakes and venomed glades,
O'er gusty hills, sun-flushed and high,
That shook their locks against the sky,
O'er shady stretches long and lone,
O'er rocky ledge, through caverned stone,
Past mornings prime, past twilight gray,
I've tracked my foemen on their way
With heart relentless, and with hand
Ready to hurl the deadly brand
With naught of mercy nor of fear.
And yet to-night I'm standing here,
Afraid to face a maiden's eyes,
Afraid to reach to grasp the prize
My heart desires all else above,
Her precious treasury of love.
I've tried to break the bonds that roll
Their magic coils around my soul,
By daring danger on the lake
When storm-clouds o'er its bosom break—
By roaming over flood and fell—
By trying every potent spell
The old magician 'neath the hill
Could summon to assist his will—
By chasing gravelights over graves,
And rambling where the were-wolf raves

Out threats of torture and of rack
To hapless ones that cross its track.
I've run death's gauntlet, day by day,
Where hungry wild-cats screech for prey,
But everywhere the haunting face
Of Budding Rose in matchless grace
Swims 'fore my eyes. Pray, mother, tell,
Will she return my love? Dispel
My doubts at once and seal my fate!"
"Sit down behind that bush and wait,"
The dame replied, "until I call
The wood-sprites up within my thrall."

V.

She lit a smoking pine-knot red,
And swayed it thrice around her head,
Then hurled it hissing in the marsh,
The while her voice on air-wings harsh
Passed through the thronging shadows' dense,
Unto love's hearing strained and tense.
"I hear the voices of the trees
In answer to the asking breeze,
And this is what the voices say :
'True love will always have its way !'
Come forth, my children, to the light ;
The answer to the breeze is right."
The maiden came with drooping head,
The brave with grave and measured tread,
And joined their hands above the blaze.
"For you, fond lovers, length of days

I prophesy, and happy times.
Your lives shall run like merry rhymes
Through many years of full content,
And, when at last your course is spent,
Your children shall revere your name,
Your children's children—" Flashed a flame,
A lightning blast, athwart their eyes,
And death assailed them in the guise
Of Iroquois, the Hurons' dread—
And seeress, lovers, all were dead !

Father Daniel's Last Mass.

July 4th, 1648.

ALONE in the forest's verdant shade 'neath a towering pine
he stood,
Erect and agile and strong of frame, with a visage mild
and good.
One hand to his broad, low brow was raised, in the other
was clasped a book
On which his half-closed eyes were cast with a dreamy,
absent look.

Did a vision pass before his brain of the life he had left
behind,
Of lofty hopes in glorious France for the love of the Lord
resigned ?
Or were his thoughts of the peril nigh—for the wolves
prowled near the fold—
Those hungry wolves the Iroquois, blood-thirsty, fierce and
bold ?

Then he lifted his head, and a tender light shone forth
from his radiant eyes
As he looked through a rent in the foliage green at the
blue, unclouded skies,
And murmured: "Father, Thy will be done ; I have driven
the world from me.
Without reserve my naked soul I humbly offer Thee."

With a gesture meek he turned away, and walked with a
solemn air
Up the tangled wild-wood path that led to the rustic place
of prayer,
Where his faithful flock of Hurons had assembled, young
and old,
To worship God at their pastor's feet in the shelter of the
fold.

In gentle and loving tones he told, in words they could
understand,
The story of Christ, the infant God, to that simple,
reverent band ;
And, though full oft the wondrous tale he had told to
them before,
With bated breath and willing ears they heard it o'er
once more.

Then lowly they all knelt down to pray, while the birds and
the trees around
Seemed to hush their songs and still their sighs as if filled
with awe profound.

But hark ! What was that ? "The Iroquois !" rang the
warning wild and shrill,
And at once the dreaded battle-cry re-echoed from vale
and hill.

Père Daniel sprang erect to his feet, and a moment gazed
around.

There were none could fight, for the braves had gone to a
distant hunting ground,
And only the women, and aged men, and children met his
gaze,
As horror-stricken they turned to him with looks of blank
amaze.

His eyes flashed fire. He lifted his hands, and his voice,
like a trumpet clear,
Rang out o'er the din of approaching strife: "My children,
do not fear !

This day we shall be in Heaven with Christ ! Flinch
not from the chastening rod !"

And in tones of triumph baptized them all in the name of
the Triune God.

Then wrapping his vestments round his frame, with an air
of joyous guise,

He strode to the door with a smile on his lips and a
luminous light in his eyes,

And facing undaunted the fiery foe, unflinching he braved
the shock,

And died with the name of his God on his tongue at the
front of his fated flock.

The Death of Garnier.

December 7th, 1649.

It was afternoon and the gloaming
Was nestling in the glades,
While the sunlight blooming the mountains
Shot defiant beams at the shades,
When the priest on his errand of mercy
Was making his round of the town,
Where the converts clung to his blessings
As the children clung to his gown.

He was delicate, slender, and beardless,
But his heart was strung with the power
That triumphs over weakness
In danger's direst hour ;
And the smile on his pallid features,
And the light in his loving eyes,
Were like gleams of the summer heavens
Through the rifts of the cloudy skies.

To the bed of the dying Indian
He carried promise of life
In lands of eternal bounty
Beyond the realms of strife,
And he held the gates of Heaven
Ajar to the heathen soul,
That the waves of the ocean of glory
Might over its midnight roll.

He had prayed from dusk till dawning
For the safety of his flock,
As the braves had gone to the valley
To stem the tempest's shock,
Now his heart wept drops of anguish
For the souls of the unbaptized—
Oh, little he recked for the body ;
'Twas the spirit his spirit prized !

"But if it please Thee, Father,
To visit us with Thy frown,
Let me lead my lambs to Thy bosom,
Each crowned with a martyr's crown."
Then over the quiet hamlet
Came the ring of the Iroquois yell,
And he welcomed with beaming visage
The note of his funeral knell.

"The voice of God in the heavens
Is crying : 'Be not afraid !'"
He cried to the crouching creatures
Who hurried to him for aid.

“ I grant you absolution
In the name of the Christ you love.
We will mount baptized with bloodshed
To the golden throne above ! ”

Again and again upsweeping,
His voice soared o'er the din :
“ Oh, this is the day of conquest
Of the righteous over sin !
Come into the heart of Jesus,
His bosom is open wide ! ”
And thus over death triumphant
The martyr, Garnier, died.

Pontiac at Home.

THE smould'ring embers of the sun-fire had
Expired, but overhead the purple gray
And grayish-purple clouds were golden-domed
With glory tints in soft and tender glow.
The balsam-laden air rocked back and forth
The dark-boled, solemn pines with languid grace,
And toyed among the lively maple leaves
With freer hands. The pure-toned alto of
The billow's voice, the vibrant thrill of storms
At rest, commingled with the shirring strain
That swung its censer o'er the woodland scene,
The soporific sound-fumes perfumed sweet
By Love and Peace. An Indian lay upon
The velvet, mossy sward before his low
Wigwam, that strove to hide its smoke-tanned walls
Beneath the latticed splendor of the vines
Which twined their flower-gemmed foliage about
The giant hemlock limbs high-arching o'er.
Linked hand in hand the cherubs, Love and Peace,

Ran here and there like playful children, and
With gleesome touch wove flower with flower and branch
With branch into a mesh, that bore their names
Inscribed upon its page. The Indian mused,
His wrinkled face unmoved, his black eyes fixed
On coming deeds, and thus his thoughts surged fast :
“ Could one fell stroke exterminate the whites,
Had Pontiac the power to wield the blow,
My arm, heart-strengthened, would strike swift and true ”—
The hound beside him licked his rough, lank hand—
“ And blood should swell the torrents and the streams.
I’ll conquer soon ! I’ve bound the venomed thongs
About the victims, and the time draws near ”—
His bronze-brown squaw went by with laughing face,
And held her pappoose to his kissing lips—
“ For vengeance, vengeance sweeter far than life !
The crimson sky will swoop with flaming wings
And talons lightning-tipped upon the brood,
And then I’ll reign supreme, the lord of all ! ”
The licking hound-tongue touched his swarthy cheek ;
A low-crooned lullaby came from the tent,
Where mother-song soothed into sleep his son ;
The night-shades clustered home ; the beacon stars
Awoke ; and o’er the mist-wrapped waters stole
The long, low roll of distant British drums.

The United Empire Loyalists.

WITH quenchless love for the British flag, and love for
the Mother-land,
They had borne the brunt of the battle fierce, a brave,
determined band.
They had faced the foe with fearless hearts, they had done
what men could do,
And though that flag in the dust was trailed, to that flag
they were staunch and true.

Right staunch and true to the ties of old, they sacrificed
their all,
And into the wilderness set out, led on by Duty's call.
The aged were there with their snow-white hair, and their
life-course nearly run,
And the tender, laughing little ones, whose race had just
begun.

Mid-life and youth in their various moods strode side by
side afar
Through the lonely lanes, led on by the light of the love
that like a star
Beamed brightest before when the dark was dense—the
love that shall never wane
As the beacon-light of a Briton's breast, though his foemen
throng amain !

The love of country, and hearth, and home, that thrills the
patriot's breast,
And bids him follow the meteor flag, with tireless zeal and
zest,
O'er the tented field, through the dust and smoke, and the
dash of the deadly hail,
Where the squadrons clash, and the sabres flash, and the
wounded groan and wail.

Far into the depths of the mystic woods day in, day out,
they went,
And rested at night by the fire's red light, where the wolf
and the wild-cat sent
Their screeching tones through the tunnels lone of the
forest dark and grim,
As they tracked their prey through the tangled glades of
the cedar thickets dim.

Past pathless haunts, where the circling shades of hemlocks
screened from sight
The crouching savage or venomed snake ; round dawn-
struck lakes, whose light

O'er their misty brims with a drowsy glare beguiled the
wolf from its den,
With a purpose set they pushed along over bog and ferny
fen.

Past Nature's mighty temples lone, past mountain, plain,
and fell,
Where the star-eyed Night was roused from its rest by the
catamount's fierce yell,
They toiled to the goal of their heart's desire—a home on
British soil!—
And Danger's gleaming, naked sword their purpose could
not foil.

Capture of Fort Detroit.

1812.

THE summons spread throughout the land, the summons
to the brave :
It speeded west to far St. Clair, and north to Huron's wave ;
And fast into the forest wild its thrilling notes did float.
It called the woodman from his toil, the fisher from his
boat ;
And high upon the mountain lone, and deep within the
dell,
The red men heard its stirring tones and answered to them
well.
In haste they came, responsive to their country's call for
aid,—
The young, the old, the white, the red, for Truth and Right
arrayed.
Their arms were strong, their mettle true, but few in
numbers they
To cope in arms upon the field against the great array

That marched with pomp and martial blare, with banners
flaunting free,
To sweep the British from the land, and drive them o'er
the sea.
On came the force invading, laughing loud their foe to
scorn,
Full sure that they must vanish like the mist before the
morn.
But hearts of giant might, equipped in patriotic mail,
Sent tingling throes of passion through the sturdy rangers
hale
That swarmed around the standard proud, inherited from
sires
Who carried it through centuries enflamed with battle-
fires,
And left a glory-halo floating round each ample fold,
Which served to nerve the feeble and reanimate the bold.
The shock was sharp and savage, but right sudden the
rebound,
As face to face the foemen charged across the battle-
ground.
The hero-lads triumphant, fired with hot, chivalric glow,
Chased back across the border home, pell-mell, the beaten
foe.
"No time for rest!" cried Brock the brave, "let's conquer
now or die!"
And swart Tecumseh at his side re-echoed back the cry.
Then fast and far, from rank to rank, the thrilling orders
came,
That they must cross the river in the face of shot and flame.

And on they went undaunted, they, the bravest of the brave ;

They thought then but of honor, and they dreaded not the grave.

Their leader's towering figure stood erect in his canoe,
And o'er him England's banner out upon the breezes flew.

Ah, who at such a moment, and with such a leader there,
With such a flag above him, would of victory despair?—

Not one, I ween, who followed through the midst of shot
and shell

The grand heroic figure, that they knew and loved so well.
They reached the shore, they scaled the beach, and from
a favored post

They hurled like chaff before the wind the huge opposing
host,

That fled for shelter to the fort, where shelter there was
none,

For flashing fire on every side boomed out each 'leaguer's
gun.

“Advance! Advance!” rang out the cry along the battle-
tide,

“Advance! Advance!” in trumpet tones their noble
leader cried.

With answering cheers upon their lips obeyed the willing
men,

While far and wide on every side, upstarting from the glen,
The painted Indians whooping came and raised a direful
din,

As on they rushed with bounding steps the carnage to
begin.

But—oh, what now? The charge is checked, and all along
the line

The men in wonder see, and stop in answer to the sign
That by their leader's hand is made. My country, can it be
That he has craven-hearted turned? No craven heart
is he!

See high above yon bastioned wall that flutt'ring flag of
white,

Where Stripes and Stars a moment since were glitt'ring on
the sight,

And list adown the joyous ranks the thrilling tidings go:
"The fort has fallen in our hands, and with it all the foe!"

A cheer triumphant rang aloud o'er forest, field and plain,
And distant echoes caught it up and pealed it forth again.

Ah, proudly beat the hearts, I trow, of all that gallant few,
As flaming o'er the battlements the flag of England flew,
While, dumb as death, along the sward long lines of
captives came,

Who answered back with sullen looks the victors' loud
acclaim,

As from the ramparts of the fort they made the welkin
ring

With plaudits loud for Brock the brave, and cheers for
England's King.

Death of Brock.

THE roll of the drum breaks the sleep of the morning,
As it rocks back and forth in the dawning's embrace,
And the bugle's wild echoes sing widely the warning
That the enemy's hosts are approaching the place.

From their dreams spring the soldiers, alert for the greeting
That foemen to foemen are eager to make,
And they grasp up their weapons in haste for the meeting
Of bayonet with bayonet in thicket and brake.

Through field and through forest the columns advancing,
Like foam-crested waves on a shore's rocky head,
Come with flashing of bayonets and mettled steeds
prancing,
The ranks of the blue 'gainst the ranks of the red.

Then suddenly rings out the musketry's rattle,
And thunders the tone of the cannon's deep boom,
As fiercely they join in the tumult of battle,
When many brave soldiers are sent to their doom.

Aloft on the breeze is the British flag flying,
And round it the death-missives whistle and sing
A dirge for the soldiers, who proudly are dying—
Are dying for freedom, for country and king.

There are veterans there who have fought the world
over,
Regardless of danger, disdainful of death,
And grimly they fall on the sere faded clover,
And cheer for their king with their fast-failing breath.

There, too, in the carnage and tumult beside them
Are those who came forth at young Canada's call,
And though torment and danger and death may betide
them,
They will fight on to vict'ry, or fight till they fall.

They had answered the bugle's sharp summons of warning,
Those stout-hearted heroes, the York Pioneers,
And forth in the dusky gray dawn of the morning,
Had marched to the conflict untrammelled by fears.

And now they are fighting for all they hold dearest,
Their sweethearts and wives, and the country they
love :
As they think of the ones that their hearts hold the
nearest,
"Protect them !" they gasp to the Father above.

Oh, wilder and fiercer the conflict is growing,
And sorely the ranks of the red are oppressed,
And fast is the flood of the crimson tide flowing,
That is draining the lives of the bravest and best !

Can nothing be done to save from disaster
The resolute men of that brave little band ?
Ah ! who is this coming up, faster and faster,
Erect in the saddle, his sword in his hand ?

List, list to the cheer that rings high through the forest,
And list to the tidings that run down the line :
“ It is Brock who has come when our need is the sorest !
At the flash of his sword vict’ry ever will shine.”

With a shout on his lip he leaps into the battle,
Unheedful of dangers, unconscious of fears,
And his voice rings aloud o’er the musketry’s rattle :
“ Push on to the front the brave York Volunteers ! ”

He pauses, he staggers, his life-blood is flowing !
Pale, pale grow his features—he’s gasping for breath !
And seething with fury his soldiers are throwing
Themselves on the foemen, avenging his death.

They chase the invaders, they hurl them before them,
They sweep o’er the field with victorious tread,
Then they lower the flag that sadly droops o’er them,
And wrap it with reverence over the dead.

Sad, sad are the souls of the men gathered round him—

Not triumph but sorrow possesses each breast—

For bravest and noblest of men had they found him.

He led them to glory, but now he's at rest.

He's at rest, but forever the fame of his story

Will shine on our annals untainted by time,

And ever will glitter the star of his glory,

Who fell at his post in his bright golden prime.

Death of Tecumseh.

"YE braves ! that fear no foes, and laugh at death,
Right well I know that to your latest breath
You'll fight like heroes, or like heroes fall,—
So now on you I confidently call
To hurl destruction with relentless hand
Upon the base invaders of our land !
The white man's signal-gun has failed to sound,
And silence broods his coward camp around.
We need not care—in sooth it's better so—
Let's dash alone upon the hated foe,
Grasp for ourselves bright vict'ry's royal crown,
And share with none the prize of high renown !"
Like statues round their stalwart chief they stood
Within the margin of the tangled wood,
While spake Tecumseh thus in fervent strain,
Though every eye flashed fire, and every brain
Burned with desire to raise the battle-cry,
Rush to the field, and win the fight or die.

For honor, glory, fame, the victors' meeds,
He urged his eager men to daring deeds,
Who in response with shouts the silence broke,
And charged with fury through the fire and smoke.
A moment more and then the meeting came
With roar of thunder and with flash of flame,
While piled in bloody heaps the warriors fell,
And filled the woods with many a dying yell.
Tecumseh's voice rang ever on the air,
And where the fight was fiercest he was there,
Until at last the fatal bullet sped,
And, dying, fell he 'mong the ghastly dead.
With breasts by grief and bitter vengeance riven,
The red men raised their battle-cry to heaven,
Closed round their chieftain's corpse and vainly tried
To curb the torrent of the fiery tide
That swept upon them with resistless flow,
And hurled them headlong with its mighty blow.
But few escaped from out the carnage then
Of that chivalric band of desperate men,
But those that did with death-defying ire,
Heart linked to heart by patriotic fire,
Bore off Tecumseh to a resting place
Deep in the dusky forest's sad embrace.

Burial of Tecumseh.

'Tis midnight, and no sound is heard within
The forest vast, save when the wind, with weird
And wailing moan, sobs through the lofty pines,
And doles a mournful dirge above the place
Where sleep the dead. The demons twain of War
And Death have reaped an awful harvest there,
And on the golden-colored leaves there lies
A deeper stain than Nature's brush is wont
To paint thereon--the tinge of human gore.
Throughout the day the forest dense has rung
With trumpet-blasts of War, but now the hush
Of Death has settled down upon the scene
And silence reigns around. Ah! what are these?
What ghostly shades are these, that glide along
With noiseless step? Are they the phantom forms
Of braves long dead, that prowl again above
Their tombs? Look! There they halt, and circling round
A narrow pit, place in its dusky depths

A something stiff and motionless. List now !
A low, sad song—that hardly wakes to life
The faintest of the echoes slumbering there—
Is chanted softly o'er the yawning grave,
Recounting all the famous deeds of him
Whose lifeless body lies outstretched before
Them there. In sobs of vengeance dies the song,
As on the nerveless bosom, once so brave,
The clammy earth is cast, and autumn leaves
Are piled above to hide the sacred spot
From the invaders' gaze. The bitter task
Is done. One long, one lingering look, and then
Their pent-up feelings burst the bonds, and give
Expression to a cry that rings "Revenge"
For miles around, and frights the foemen in
Their sombre bivouac by the battle-ground.
Ere die the echoes of that awful yell
The mourners vanish in the murky gloom,
And solemn silence settles once again
Around the secret tomb where they have placed
Tecumseh, noblest of the Indian race.

Laura Secord.

ON the sacred scroll of glory
Let us blazon forth the story
Of a brave Canadian woman, with the fervid pen of fame,
So that all the world may read it,
So that every heart may heed it,
And rehearse it through the ages to the honor of her name.

In the far-off days of battle,
When the muskets' rapid rattle
Far re-echoed through the forest, Laura Secord sped along
Deep into the woodland mazy,
Over pathways wild and hazy,
With a firm and fearless footstep and a courage staunch
and strong.

She had heard the host preparing,
And at once with dauntless daring
Hurried off to give the warning of the fast-advancing foe ;

And she flitted like a shadow
Far away o'er fen and meadow,
Where the wolf was in the wildwood, and the lynx was
lying low.

From within the wild recesses
Of the tangled wildernesses
Sounds mysterious pursued her 'long the winding forest
way,
And she heard the gutt'ral growling
Of the bears, that, near her prowling,
Crushed their course through coverts gloomy with their
cubs in noisy play.

Far and near the hideous whooping
Of the painted Indians, trooping
For the foray, pealed upon her with a weird, unearthly
sound,
While great snakes went gliding past her
As she sped on fast and faster,
And disaster on disaster seemed to threaten all around.

Thus for twenty miles she travelled
Over pathways rough and ravelled,
Braving danger for her country like the fabled ones of
yore,
Till she reached her destination,
And forewarned the threatened station
Of the wave that was advancing to engulf it deep in gore.

Just in time the welcome warning
Came unto the men, that, scorning
To retire before the foemen, rallied ready for the fray,
And they gave such gallant greeting,
That the foe was soon retreating
Back in wild dismay and terror on that glorious battle-day.

Few returned to tell the story
Of the conflict sharp and gory
That was won with brilliant glory by that brave Canadian
band,
For the host of prisoners captured
Far outnumbered the enraptured
Little group of gallant soldiers fighting for their native land.

Braver acts are not recorded
In historic treasures hoarded,
Than the march of Laura Secord through the forest long
ago,
And no nobler deed of daring
Than the cool and crafty snaring
By the band at Beaver Dam of all that well-appointed foe.

But we know if war should ever
Rage again o'er field or river,
And the hordes of the invader should appear within our
land,
Far and wide the trumpets pealing
Would awake the same old feeling,
And again would deeds of daring sparkle out on every hand.

A Story of the Forest.**I.**

UPON a craggy height, that towered its rough
Crest o'er the white-capt surges of the grand
Old river, stood a tall and dusky form.
The crimson sun that lit the purple clouds
With golden grandeur as it bade the world
Good-night, shone brightly on his lofty brow,
And lit his dusky features with a fire
That sparkled back the brightness of his wild
And flashing eyes. In silence stood he for
A while, and then, as o'er his heaving breast
A tide of passion swept its scorching wave,
And rankled up each unhealed, mental wound,
His voice burst out in accents deep at times
And fierce, as if it echoed back the roar
Of wild Niagara's awful voice ; anon
It sank in strains as plaintive, sad, and low
As great Ontario's rippling whisper, when,
Becalmed, it laves its soft and sandy beach
With wooing touch.

“ A beauteous country lies
Outspread before me, but its charm has fled,
And over everything a shade has passed
Like death upon the brow of blooming youth,
And gloomy voices floating up from hill
And dale and surging stream, seem taunting me.
I heed you not, begone !—and yet I dare
Not disobey your words ! The very dead
Would rise against me if I did, and down
Within the leafy dells, where rest their bones,
Each grinning skull would gnash its naked jaws
The while I passed, and bony hands would point
Their fleshless palms in scorn. The times have changed,
Ye ghostly ones ! A few short years ago
The forest bloomed in radiance around,
And roamed the red man, proud and free,
The lord of all the land. The pale-face came,
And everywhere before his blighting hand
The forest green is fading out, and soon
The noble wildwood will be dead, and far
Away a feeble band, the remnant weak
Of those who once so proudly ruled the land,
Will pass in sorrow deep, in dark despair.
I know it, feel it, that our race is doomed,
And evil demons hover o’er me now,
And strive to bind my struggling soul in chains !
I fain would burst their loathsome bonds in twain,
But in my blood the poison is at work,
And sluggish is the crimson flow within
My veins. But I will rouse myself again,

And drag each dastard thought from out my breast.
Ye spirits wild, that sing o'er hill and vale
Revenge unto the wounded heart, list now
Unto my tale, and nerve me for my task !
On yon far hill I snatched from Death's embrace
A snow-white maiden, but her lover came
With stealthy step, and struck me down to earth
In heedless haste. Struck me, a noble chief,
E'en as he'd smite his dog ! Struck me, and yet
I answered not the blow ! A cursèd spell
Seemed o'er me cast, and like a beaten cur
I slunk away, and here I stand, while on
My hands no trace of human blood is seen.
A haunting face is ever present with
Me, too, that seems to guide me at its will.
I rushed away into the forest wild,
But it came there and brought me back again.
And so I've wandered circling round the spot
Where lives the maid whose life I saved, and as
The fishes circle round the light until
They meet—but 'tis not so ! an eagle, I
Will proudly swoop upon the tempting prey,
And bear her off triumphant in my clasp."

II.

"Rock, mountain, river, forest, here once more
I stand and hold communion with you all !
But, ah, how changed I am since when I raged,
And vowed out vengeance here against a foe !
The fates withheld my fiery arm, and I

Was left upon the battle-field as dead,
Until my rival had found out and borne
Me to his home. With tender care he bound
My wounds, and kept me till they lost their smart.
Had he but known how I had thirsted for
His blood, would he have tended me so well ?
And she, his promised wife, whom I have loved
So madly, came and helped to bring me back
To life. But little did she dream the strife
Her presence caused within my troubled breast !
Oh, must I give her up ? I must—I must !
Without her life is naught to me, and yet
I'd rather die than do injustice to
Her lover now ! My mind is weak. I fear
I cannot live and love her not. I know
My quenchless passion will ere long consume
The feeble bonds of right I fain would bind
About it, and my soul will fall before
Its force. The path of Life—the path of Death—
Which shall I take ? Of Life ? The way is dark
Before me now no ray of light illumines
The gloom. Of Death ? Ah, yes, I'll dare it all !
My life, a sacrifice, I give unto
The shrine of honor. Oh, ye phantom braves,
I come to join you in your mystic world !
Farewell, farewell, old earth, a long farewell ! ”
He cast a parting glance around, and then
Plunged headlong in the boiling flood, the while
The evening sun sank down behind the hills.

The Rivals

I.

A STALWART youth strode briskly o'er
The root-entangled forest floor,
While round him played in pantomime
The shadows of the even-time.
He heeded not the elfin band
That circled round him hand in hand,
And wove the woof of darkness well
O'er gurgling stream and cloistered dell.
Nor heeded he the barking calls—
Resounding through the leafy halls—
Of trooping wolves on plunder bent.
His anxious heart was more intent
On fears begot of love than those
Flung into life by woodland foes.

II.

Anon an open space appeared
From which the hand of toil had cleared
The maples and the purring pines,
And there enwreathed with clinging vines,

Anear the margin of the wood,
A shanty, stump-surrounded, stood.
The young man paused within the shade
That walled the margin of the glade,
And to the trees around his woes
He slowly, sadly did disclose.
"She once was kind—'twas months ago—
But now I fear she looks upon
Another with more partial eyes—
Alas, that he should win the prize !
To-night my fate I must decide.
I fear me much she will deride
My awkward courting—Be it so !
Come good or ill, I'm bound to know—"
His words abruptly ceased as o'er
The clearing, hast'ning to the door,
He knocked in nervous dread and doubt
Upon its oaken panels stout.

III.

He raised the latch with timid hand
Responsive to the gruff command,
"Come in !" and by the candle's glare
Beheld his rival seated there.
"I'm glad you've come," the father cried.
"Just sit you down here at my side.
I want to ask you 'bout the way
You fought the fire the other day."
The mother, too, a welcome gave.
The daughter bowed with visage grave,

Spake words of formal greeting cold,
Tossed back a wayward tress of gold,
And turned to smile at other eyes,
That answered back right lover-wise.

IV.

The father talked of fire and frost,
Of lake and river tempest-tossed,
Of storm and calm, of wind and snow,
Of black bears in the swamps below,
The while the weary mother closed
Her heavy eyelids as she dozed
And dreamed of daily duties done
And household struggles deftly won.
Beyond the radius of the rays
Cast by a tallow candle's blaze
The daughter in a corner sat,
Engaged in confidential chat,
With neither word nor look for him.
Scant wonder, then, in silence grim
He fiercely wished himself away,
And after but a brief delay
Abruptly bade a gruff adieu,
And soon again was dashing through
The dingy dungeons of the night,
With heavy heart and footsteps light.

V.

His homeward path, five miles or more,
In reckless mood he hastened o'er,
And went to bed resolved to rise
As soon as dawning touched the skies,
Take his farewell of hearth and home,
And hither, thither onward roam
Until new follies should o'erpower
The folly regnant of the hour.
The midnight found him still awake,
But long ere day began to break
His musing melted into dreams
Of love requited. Golden beams
Beguiled him on through fairy bowers,
And happiness in shining showers
Illumed his soul with radiance sweet.
Her pouting mouth was raised to greet
Him with a glowing red-lipped kiss,
When suddenly with savage hiss
A whirlwind swung him in its arms !
He, starting, woke as loud alarms
Rang out upon the silence dead,
And on his ears the tidings dread
Were shouted in stentorian notes
By half a dozen husky throats :
"The Indians come! Awake! Hallo !
The reds are on the rampage—ho !"

VI.

The starry garments of the night
Were fading at the dawning light
As, peering out into the gloom
Through the barred windows of his room,
He asked the meaning of the noise.
"The Indians are out! The boys
From Abel Brown's brought in the news.
Come on, there is no time to lose.
They're out in force and full of fight;
The eastern settlement's alight
With burning shanties, and they say
The scalping-knife is at its play."
With hot impatience waited they
For his appearance, then away
Into the forest mystic sped
To meet their savage foemen dread.

VII.

In silence on through glen and glade,
With eyes alert for ambushade,
The hunters left the miles behind.
At times upon the morning wind
The echoes of the warwhoops came,
And presently a snake of flame
Was seen encircling, fold on fold,
A shanty in its fiery hold,

While painted redmen, full a score,
In fiendish glee and drunk with gore,
Were dancing round a captive band.
A moment more and hand to hand
And knife to knife, the red and white
Contestants closed in clashing fight.

VIII.

Our hero saw as in a dream,
Surrounded by the ruddy gleam
Of scalping-knife and flaming brand,
In agony the maiden stand
That he had loved full many a day.
Anear his feet his rival lay,
While o'er him towered in hungry glee
An Indian eager to set free,
The pulsing blood within his breast.
An ugly thought, an evil guest
Amid the mob that thronged his brain,
Besought our hero to restrain
His arm from giving needed aid.
"Nay!" shouted he, the while he swayed
His musket clubbed above his head,
"Better that I myself be dead
Than hold my hand in such a cause."
With but a momentary pause
The deed was done, the rival spared.
Immediately the man, who'd dared

The danger, fell from hatchet wound,
And lay awhile in swoon profound.
When he, recovering, oped his eyes
He found to his intense surprise
His head was pillowed in the arms
Of her he loved, while love's alarms
Burst through the barriers of her breast
And fervently that love confessed,
Regardless that his rival near
Her tender wooing words could hear.

The Star of Fame.

A GHOSTLY presence came unto the child
At eve, within his little trundle bed,
And o'er him bent a face so fair and mild,
It seemed an angel hovering near his head.
One hand upon his golden hair was placed,
The other pointed through the gloom afar
Where gloom had fled and in its place was traced
The golden throne of an effulgent star.

And then, as bounden by a mystic spell,
The boy arose and went into the night,
And journeyed far o'er plain and bosky fell
Until he met and passed the morning light.
With straining step and eager, beaming eyes,
He strove to reach the star thus sparkling bright,
But though he struggled for the glittering prize,
It waned away and vanished from his sight.

With wearied steps he trudged his homeward road,
And all his boyish limbs were stiff and sore,
But when he reached his childhood's loved abode,
Its occupants were gone—their lives were o'er.

The house, a creaking, rotten ruin, stood
Amid a mass of trailing, tangled weeds ;
And near at hand, beside the dismal wood,
The spring was choked with vile and fenny reeds.

No sound arose around, excepting when
The wind with wail dolorous crept across
The ruined, dismal old hearthstone, and then
Escaped through mouldy walls o'ergrown with moss,
And softly sighing, sadly sobbing, said,
"They all are dead,"—and then in low refrain
Came trembling feebly back, "They all are dead ;"
As far-off echoes told it o'er again.

Within a grove their grass-grown graves he found,
And sinking down beside them moaned and cried,
Then crying bent his head unto the ground,
And bending there the weary mortal died.
At morn the people passing by perceived
A thin old man with long and silver hair,
Whose face upturned the stamp of death received,
The while his hands were clasped in silent prayer.

A boy he started in pursuit of fame,
That sparkled brightly in his mental sky,
But age o'ertook him ere he reached his aim,
And weak and weary came he home to die.
So deeply bent upon his childish chase,
He heeded not the year-stones as they went,
But age retarded soon his boyish race,
And death extinguished then his life misspent.

The Seraph's Task.

WHEN the fiat of creation
Was thundered from the Throne,
And borne on the wings of the echoes
To the void, where Space alone,
On his mighty dais seated,
Swayed a despot-sceptre far
O'er the realms of endless distance
To the path of the nearest star,
I stood in the ranks of the seraphs
With my flaming wings outspread,
The halo of heaven's lustre
In light-waves over my head.
Then a sweet, soft voice flew to me,
A page by the Master sent,
A messenger golden-throated,
And in homage low I bent.
"Fill up a measureless chalice
To the very brim," it said,

“From the font of Love, and follow
Where the angel of light has led ;
And over the new world flutter
Your ceaseless wings, and drain
From the bounteous cup o’erflowing
The precious heavenly rain
On the souls of mortals henceforth
Till earth’s brief day is done.”
With a sweep of my swift wings downward
I circled the shining sun,
And reached the puny planet
Where the pigmy swarms of men
Live out their lives in a moment,
Are buried away, and then
Have their places taken by others,
Who struggle, delve, and toil,
And fight like hungry demons
For possession of the soil.
O’er the seething mob I flourish
My goblet brimming o’er,
And anoint the ocean’s billows,
The land from shore to shore.
I visit the hut on the highway,
The shanty in the swale,
The cabin upon the prairie,
The cot in the flowery vale,
The camp on the lichened ramparts
Of the miner-tunnelled rock,
The lighthouse lone that the tempests
Assail with savage shock,

The palace of the noble,
The lodge of the porter old,
And the squalid hovel filthy
In the slums that the cities hold.
The young and the old regardless,
The saint and the sinner alike,
The rich and the poor my showers
In gleaming dashes strike.
To some they bring endless sorrow,
To some unbounded joy,
And to some that saddened pleasure,
The trouble of Love's alloy.
At times I catch the echoes
Of the anthems round the Throne,
And note the glint of glories,
That wander far and lone,
And my heart leaps in my bosom
At the thought of soaring back
With the angel of light in the evening
On his home-returning track;
And I hold my exhaustless measure
At arm's length in the air,
And pour with the rush of a torrent
The contents everywhere.

A Touch of Nature.

As an Indian brown, as an Indian rude, as an Indian keen
and sly,
His summer home was the forest wide, and his summer
tent the sky.
For a score of years or more he had tracked the bear to its
tangled den,
And he knew the ways of the wilds full well, but naught
of the ways of men.

He had trapped and hunted for game, when the bay was
hooded with mist and storm,
And he'd dreamed with the stars through the summer
nights, when the lake's breath fluttered warm
Through the tasseled boughs of the droning pines, running
minor chords among
The flowing swells and the rhythmic beats of nature's
wordless song.

His thoughts were as knotty and gnarled as his hands, and
he deemed it no sin to slay
The red-skinned braves that prowled like wolves in the
wake of his rugged way.
Three times since the break of day had he fired, and thrice
had an Indian bold
O'erleaped the bounds of the realms of life into death's
arms white and cold.

He knew the avengers were on his trail, like hounds on
the scent of the deer,
But his aim was true, and his gun was sure—What then
need the hunter fear,
As he deftly bounds o'er the boggy maze and the symbol-
circled hill,
And welcomes the draughts of danger as the river welcomes
the rill?

When he bent 'neath the beeches that bowered a ridge on
the crest of a runlet's rim,
He noted a sight that, wild as he was, had terrors for even
him.
A young pappoose had toppled o'er the bank to the stream
below,
And the dancing ripples were dragging it down to a deadly
rapid's flow.

He heard the mother's startled cry as she rushed along
the bank,
And he sprang from the shade of his covert dense to a bed
of rushes rank,

And thence waded out through mire and ooze, waist deep
to the heart of the flood,
When a bullet pinged to its billet in his breast with an
angry thud.

With a guttural cry to the God above to shrive his soul
from sin,
He strove with all his waning strength the child from
the waves to win,
Then handing it up to its mother's arms, with a ghastly
look of pride,
He turned to face the coming foe as hero-like he died.

The Lost Baby.

THROUGH the broad, old-fashioned kitchen,
Kicking up a rousing din,
Rushed the farmer's noisy children
When their mother called them in.
They'd been out upon the haystack,
Sliding headlong down the hay,
Heels akimbo, till the twilight
Fluttered o'er the marshes gray.
Hearts afire with merry mischief,
Spirits boiling o'er with fun,
Round the chairs and tables romping
Did they rush and shout and run,
While their jolly peals of laughter
Echoed through the attic wide,
Where the frightened little "mouses"
Scampered off in haste to hide.
"Gracious me!" the farmer shouted,
"Mother, put the rogues to bed,

For their clatters and their rackets
Ring like buzz-saws through my head."
But the little urchins promised
That they'd be as good as good
While their grandma told a story—
That was if she only would.
So the fond old grandma kindly
Put her knitting needles down,
Pushed her spec's among the furrows
Nestling 'neath her cap's quaint crown,
And, as o'er her age-dimmed features
A bright ray of pleasure crossed,
Said she guessed she'd tell a story
'Bout a boy that once was lost.
"He was such another mischief
As my little Tommy here,
Always toddlin' after something
Just without a bit of fear.
Now, one day, his ma was busy
Making pan-cakes for the tea,
When she sudden-like bethought her,
'Where can little Toddlin's be?
I've not heard his merry laughter
For ten minutes, I declare—
Johnny, have you seen the baby
In the barnyard anywhere?'
Johnny from the stable answered :
'Just a little while ago
He was chasing the old rooster
With the handle of a hoe,

And he told me he was going
To the bush to have some fun—
“Guess I’ll shoot some great big bearses
Wif yis hannel for a gun.”
Then he skipped off past the corner
Through the mud without regard,
And I heard him makin’ havoc
With the hens around the yard.
You will hear ‘em all a-chorus
In a moment if you wait.’
Presently the mother started,
Pointing to an open gate
Leading to the summer-fallow,
Round which crowded up the trees,
With their long limbs nodding grimly
To the singing of the breeze,
And her voice seemed all entangled
With the beatin’ of her heart,
As a pang of terror smote it
With an anguish-bearded dart.
‘Hurry, Johnny, to the forest.
Off and search without delay!’
Then with flying footsteps sped she
O’er the fallow’s rugged way,
Till she rushed among the choppers,
Underbrushing in a swale,
With her eyes ablaze with terror
And her features deathly pale.
Up responsive to her pleading
Straightway strode the sturdy men

O'er the trail beyond the meadow
Into thicket, swamp and glen,
Where the wild-cats held their concerts,
Caterwaulin' at the moon,
Sailin' boat-like through the heavens
At the ghostly midnight noon.
Vain the search. The shadows gathered
'Till the groves were black as graves,
And the by-paths to the clearin's
Were as dim as mountain caves.
When the mother, lantern-seekin',
Hurried to the shanty door,
Where she stopped in blank amazement,
For before her on the floor
Was the little lost one seated
In the remnants of the dough.
'Why, mamma, where has 'ou bin to,
Yat's yust what I wants to know?
I went seepin' wif e piggies,
An' I hided den from ou.
An' den when I went to find ou,
Den I dess ou hided too;
So I kied till I was seepy,
Den I seeped a hull lot more,
Till I found dis pan of nice stuff
To make picters on de floor.'
Fondly did the loving mother
Press her darling to her breast,
Thanking God her little birdie
Had not wandered from the nest,

But the great rough men, on coming
At her call from out the wood,
Laughed at mother's dough-daubed darling
Just as hard as e'er they could.
There, the story's over, children ;
Off to bed you'd better go !
Yes, your father was the lost one,
And I found him in the dough."



A Forest Singer.

WHEN we got married, Jane an' me, 'way back in forty-two,
There was a family confab as to what we ought to do
To earn a decent livin', and it mostly was agreed
The city was the spot where we was likely to succeed.

But we decided for ourselves that we would rather try
To build a home within the bush beneath the country sky,
So by the Maple Creek we camped until our shanty rose,
Hewed from the wildwood's quiet heart by love-directed
blows.

Life there was sweeter far to us, the sunshine far more fair,
I believe, than 'twould have been if we had settled
here
If others pointed with a careless sort of hand—
me the wildwood free, old nature's native

Not long alone we lived, for soon a sturdy little lad
Was rompin' round the shanty, an' when I was tired ~~or~~ sad
His jolly shouts chased clean away the dumps from out my
heart.

Another came, an' then a third, each noisy; wild, an' smart.

You couldn't find sich boys as them in fifty miles about,
As all the neighbors round agreed without a bit o' doubt;
But when the fourth wee codger came we saw he wasn't
strong;

It seemed the hinges in his back had kind o' twisted wrong.

We thought at first he'd never walk, but as the seasons
went,

His legs grew firmer, though his back was sort o' curved
an' bent,

An' he was able to go round, although he never played,
But mostly sat in summer days within the sumach's shade.

There on a little rustic seat he used to sit an' sing,
An' mimic of the birds until he made the woodland ring
With jest the finest music that a mortal ever heard—
Twas like a seraph singin' to the warblin' of a bird.

An' of'en of an evenin', when the twilight died away,
An' up the foggy pathway of the marsh-clouds cold an' gray
The round-faced moon rose smilin' in a glory-circlin' ring,
'Twould minded you of heaven fer to hear that youngster
sing.

His voice, like ripplin' water, 'most asleep on sandy bars,
Would float above the pine-tops tall, that p'inted to the
stars,
An' then you'd fancy you could feel an echo from on
high,
As if the harps had caught it up beyond the listenin' sky.

The other boys were jest as kind to him as kind could be,
But sometimes in a thoughtless way the words would slip
that he
Was no account when work was round, an' then his eyes
would fill
With tears that seemed to numb his song till it growed
mute an' still.

One spring the snow was very deep, an' when the thaw
set in
A flood came down the mountain like an army bound to
win.
It piled the floatin' ice-cakes high within the river's arms,
While we stood helpless on the bank an' shouted our
alarms.

A great ice-mass had tangled with the branches of a tree,
Though but a moment's loppin' with an axe would set it
free,
An' soon its frightful rampart would 'a' backed the
surgin' tide
Until it swirled the shanty from the river's shelvin' side.

Down came the boilin' fury of the waves with roarin'
sweep—

Oh, who would brave the danger an' across the pathway
leap,

Although the doing guarded home against the freshet's wave,
When by the doing he was doomed to an untimely grave?

For answer o'er the heavin' fies a boyish figure clomb,—

My cripple laddie givin' up his life to save his home!

He neared the spot hand over hand and broke the bond in
twain,

Then backward turned an' tried to reach the bank, but
tried in vain.

We saw him lift his little arms an' toss the axe away.

We saw him clasp his tiny hands as if he meant to pray,

An' then we heard his voice swell out, a wonderment o'
song;

I hear it now an' always will throughout my hull life-long.

"I ain't no use on earth at all; it's better I should die,

An' mebbe God can make me good for somethin' in the sky.

Tell mamma that"—We heard no more, he disappeared
from view,

As down the ramparts toppled an' the fierce waves hurried
through.

We found him in the mornin' with a smile upon his face,

An' then we bore his body to its peaceful resting-place

Among the shifting shadows where he'd loved to sit an' sing

Until the leaves had fallen an' the birds had taken wing.

Rest.

WHEN I plow all day in the fallow lot,
An' the summer sun shines fierce an' hot
On my achin' back an' my weary limbs,
I rest myself by hummin' the hymns
That Mary sings o'er the cradle to
Our little lassie with eyes of blue,
Till the baby eyelids, soft an' white,
Are folded bud-like over her sight.

From morn till night do I come an' go
Along the furrows to an' fro,
An' my big boots covered with clods of clay,
Seem to hold me back from the close of day ;
But I think of the songs that Mary sings,
While back an' forth the cradle swings,
An' the croonin' melody, low an' sweet,
Seems to lighten the burden that clogs my feet.

It's rather tirin', you'd better believe,
To tramp from the dawn till the dusky eve
Behind a plow that will kick in spite
Of a fellow's efforts to steer it right;
But the echoes of Mary's cradle-song
Float into my heart as I trudge along,
An' give to my thoughts bright golden wings
That waft them high over earthly things.

What does she sing? Well, I hardly know,
But it's mostly somethin' soft an' low.
I hain't no ear for tunes, they say,
But hers sound like the winds at play
Around the crowns of the sandy dunes
In the drowsy hours of the afternoons,
When the birds are asleep, an' the pine woods' moan
Joins in with a kind of undertone.

Yes, Mary, my darlin', sings an' sings,
While back an' forth the cradle swings,
An' the croonin' melody, low an' sweet,
Seems to lighten the burden that clogs my feet.
The words? Well—"Angels are hoverin' round—"
An' "Up to the realms of glory I'm bound—"
But the nearest, an' dearest, an' sweetest, an' best,
Is the promise of Jesus to give us "rest."

The Dinner is Ready, Tom.

THE wee wife looks from the doorway down
Through the far dim forest aisles,
Her fair hands shading her eyes of brown
And her sweet lips gemmed with smiles.
Then she calls with a voice of cheery sound,
"The dinner is ready, Tom!"
And back from the beeches the echoes bound,
"Dinner—ready—Tom!"
While a faint voice steals from the marshy ground,
"Dear—old—Tom!"

With a buoyant step and a joyous song
She leaves the shanty door,
And dancing the tangled path along
Her voice rings as before,

Above the lilt of the robin's lay,
 "The dinner is ready, Tom !"
And afar the riotous echoes play,
 "Dinner—ready—Tom !"
While a whisper comes from far away,
 "Dear—old—Tom !"

'Mid the fragile ferns and the golden-rod
 She trips her dainty way,
And lightly springs o'er the mossy sod
 Near the slough and the quagmire gray.
There comes a call like the coo of a dove,
 "The dinner is ready, Tom !"
That is echoed back by the branches above,
 "Dinner—ready—Tom !"
And the lowland sprites sing in tones of love,
 "Dear—old—Tom !"

The golden dreams of the times to come
 Give zest to the might of his arm,
And he works with a will to build his home,
 With a will to clear his farm.
He starts—he listens—again the sound,
 "The dinner is ready, Tom !"
Is caught by the hills and tossed around,
 "Dinner—ready—Tom !"
And the beaver meadows the strains rebound,
 "Dear—old—Tom !"

He turns, and at hand through the sumachs sees

A vision with golden hair,

And he hurries to greet her among the trees,

His household angel fair.

With a merry laugh she says as they meet,

“The dinner is ready, Tom !”

And his lips press hers as the echoes repeat,

“Dinner—ready—Tom !”

And up from her heart well the echoes sweet,

“Dear—old—Tom !”

New Year's Greeting.

CANADA TO HER CHILDREN.

HEARKEN, children, to my greeting,
Borne upon the wild winds, beating
Onward now, and now retreating
 Back and forth o'er sea and strand ;
Listen to the words they bring you,
Listen to the songs they sing you—
Songs I taught the winds to wing you,
 Bring you, sing you, through the land.

Floating o'er each frozen river,
Where the sunbeams glance and quiver,
Do the wild winds wail and shiver
 Out my greeting unto thee ;
And across the misty meadows,
Shrouded now with snowy shadows,
Over mountains, moors and meadows,
 Do they sing this song for me.

Soft at first and sadly sighing,
While the old year, fainting, dying,
Gasps the last few moments flying
 Ere it sinks among the dead ;
Then with joyous notes outwelling,
Over hill and valley swelling,
Trills the wind triumphant, telling
 Forth the greeting that I said :

“Gone the old year is forever,
Floating down Time's rapid river,
Back unto its gracious giver,
 With its freight of joy and woe
Printed plainly on its pages,
To be read throughout the ages
By the criticising sages,
 To the great world as they go.

“And the new year now is living,
And its new-born moments giving
Unto every mortal living
 Chances to redeem the past ;
Let each one be up and doing,
And some noble cause pursuing,
That this year may bear reviewing
 Better far than did the last.

“All and each of ev'ry order,
Dwelling now within my border,
Do I call to quell disorder,
 With a never failing aim ;

Though your hair be gray or golden,
Though your heart be young or olden,
Unto you I am beholden
For the honor of my name.

“And the floating of my banner,
All depends upon the manner
That throughout my mighty manor
You, my children, fight for right;
And my honor and my glory
And the triumph of my story,
When the present time is hoary,
All depend upon your might.

“Onward, upward ever going,
With my flag above you flowing,
Bravely on the breezes blowing,
Press your steadfast way along;
Armed with strong determinations,
High among the highest nations,
There to vent your aspirations
With the noblest of the throng;

“Till a beacon, brightly beaming,
Of a rare and radiant seeming,
May Canadian glory, gleaming,
Spread its splendor o'er the world;
And with England upward scaling,
In the fight for right unfailing,
With a courage never quailing,
May my banner be unfurled!

“ And when life at length is ended,
And your bodies have descended,
And your dust with dust has blended,

 May the New Year's Day above,
From all sin and sorrow riven,
Unto each and all be given,
Of the endless year of Heaven
 With a greeting full of love.”

A Canadian Veteran.

It was summer-time, and softly swept the warm sweet air
along,
Laden with the breath of flowers, laden with the wild-birds'
song ;
And it brushed the long white tresses of an old man's silver
hair,
As beside the open casement sat he dreaming in his chair,
And upon his aged heart-strings played a low Æolian tune,
Bringing back to his December thoughts and fancies of his
June.
But a quick step on the stairway, and a quick voice in the
hall,
Sent the past into the shadows and the present did recall ;
As a tall and stalwart stripling, with a smooth and
beardless face,
Eagerly into his presence strode with manly air and grace.
"Grandsire," cried he then right quickly, and his voice
rang loud and clear,
"I have donned my suit of armor, I am now a volunteer !

I have donned my suit of armor for my country and my
Queen,
And I hope to be as valiant as my good grandsire has
been."
Then a flush lit up the features, erst so wan and deathly
pale,
And the old man's eyes shone proudly on the youth so stout
and hale.
"I was dreaming, grandson," said he, "dreaming of the
buried days
When the world lay spread before me, draped in clouds of
golden haze ;
So when first you came unto me, clad in hues of British
red,
I was sure it was my brother, who at Lundy's Lane fell
dead.
I was sure that it was Harry—Harry, noble, brave and
true !—
I was sure that it was Harry, for he looked so much like
you !
Oh, I trust, my darling grandson, that the time will
never be
When our beauteous young Dominion shall have need to
call on thee,
But I know that to the summons you will answer without
fear
When the drumbeat calls to battle each Canadian volunteer.
Still within my time-worn bosom leaps the blood with
eager glow
As I think upon the far time when I went to fight the foe.

Ah, right well do I remember when the hasty summons
came,

Calling on each true Canadian to repel with sword and
flame

Back the vast hordes of invaders that would fain have
swept away

From our land the flag of England and reduced us 'neath
their sway.

'Father,' said I, 'I am going—brother Harry's going
too—

We will fight for home and country, do the best that we
can do !'

'I have fought for dear old England, fought and bled for
her,' said he,

'On the billow-surgings courses of her wide domain, the sea ;
And I proudly bid you follow now the meteor flag of old,
Bear it bravely up before you or die bravely 'neath
its fold !'

Thus with firm unfalt'ring accents did he bid us fight
or die,

But I saw him brush the tear-drops stealthily from either
eye

When our gentle-hearted mother, filled with agony and
woe,

Clung in anguish to her darlings ere she told us we
could go.

'Don't forget your God, my children ; don't forget to trust
in Him,'

Murmured she in broken whispers, while her eyes with
tears were dim,

And to each she gave a Bible, as a buckler and a shield,
To defend us from temptation in the camp or on the field.
Then I hastened through the woodland lone to bid farewell
to one

Whom I thought the sweetest creature underneath the
shining sun.

I had loved her long and truly—loved but had not dared to
tell,

For to me almost angelic seemed my beauteous little Belle.
But when from her cheeks the color fled and left her
deathly pale

As she listened, almost fainting, to my briefly worded tale,
Welled the passion from my bosom, bursting through its
wonted bound,

And the love within my being found an utterance in sound,
While in low and eager accents all my hopes did I unfold,
As I kissed the tiny fingers that in mine lay white and
cold.

‘I have loved you. ah, yes, loved you,’ whispered she in
sweet reply,

With a flush upon her features and the love-light in her
eye,

‘Since the days when we were children roaming round in
youthful glee,

But I sometimes feared,’ she faltered, ‘that you had no
love for me.

Now, alas, poor boy, you’re going, yet I cannot bid you
stay,

But remember when you’re absent that for you I’ll wait
and pray.

Though the parting rends my bosom, still will I be proud
of you,
Knowing that for home and country you'll be valiant,
staunch and true.'
Then her voice broke down in anguish, and I strove to
soothe her fears,
But I left her bent in sorrow, left her weeping bitter tears.
With the Union Jack above us, soon we marched to meet
the foe,
And at Lundy's Lane brave Harry was in death laid cold
and low.
As I wept above his body grew a feeling fierce and stern,
Filling all my brain with madness, making it for vengeance
burn,
Till I hungered for the conflict as a tiger for its prey,
And with fiery exultation rushed into each bloody fray.
On I went in reckless humor, braving death in every
form,
Foremost in the van of battle, at the front in every storm,
Till at length while fleetly charging, by the red-cross banner
led,
Fell I bleeding 'mong the dying, 'mong the ghastly heaps
of dead.
I had seen our flag in danger, seen the phalanx of the foe,
Heard their boastful shouts and cheering, as they thought
to crush us low,
Then I sprang with lightning quickness, grasped the flag
as to the sod
Fell the soldier who had held it till his soul went to his
God.

But I sank in pain and anguish, holding still my precious
prize,
While the thick'ning gloom of nightfall shielded it from
hostile eyes.
Though the battle raged around me, soon it seemed to
sound afar ;
Black grew all the air about me, dimly shone each twinkling
star.
Gasping out a prayer to Heaven, faintly calling ' Mother—
Belle !'
Folded I the flag around me 'neath whose noble folds I
fell.
And I whispered low and hoarsely unto Christ within the
sky,
' Take me to Thine arms, dear Saviour, I am not afraid to
die.'
Then no more did I remember till the fight was fought and
won,
And upon my pain-racked body shone the brilliant morn-
ing sun.
Roused I then from out my stupor when I heard a strange
voice cry,
' Here is one who like a hero for his flag did fight and die !
Worthy shroud for such a soldier is the flag of England's
king—
Ah ! he moves—poor fellow—hurry ! Bid the men assist-
ance bring !'
Tenderly they waited on me while my system strove with
Death,
And I lay upon my pallet gasping feebly for my breath.

But at last my system conquered and drove off the spectre
pale,

That had worn unto a shadow me who once was strong
and hale.

Home I tottered, frail and feeble, for my fighting days
were done,

And my parents hardly knew me, then their sole surviving
son.

Fondly to her aching bosom did my mother press her child,
Shedding tears for brother Harry as on me she sadly
smiled.

When the evening sun was setting and the day was nearly
done

Slowly walked I o'er the forest path to meet the beauteous
one

Who had promised to be faithful and to wait and pray
for me,

While I fought for home and country, fought for right and
liberty.

'Oh, my darling, I am thankful that you're saved to me,'
she cried.

'Had you died within the battle, I, too, gladly would have
died!'

But I answered low and clearly, though my heart felt like
a stone

As it thumped against my bosom in a moody monotone,

'When we parted I was stalwart, rugged, muscular and
hale,

But I've wrecked my strength and vigor, now I'm fragile,
wan and pale.

Then I had two arms to shield you, now I've got one empty
sleeve,
And the arm that's left is feeble, but my darling do not
grieve,
I was never fitted for you'—'Stop!' she cried in accents
strong.
'If you're tired and wish to leave me then I bid you haste
along
To the maiden who has won you, but if still your love is
true,
Be you then more frail than ever I will gladly marry you.
Though I loved you when we parted, now I love you fonder
still
When I see your cheeks so pallid, when I see you weak
and ill;
And I'll ever guard you truly, coax the bloom back to your
brow—
Stop! Don't talk so! I won't hear you! I will be your
master now!
Think you a Canadian maiden would desert her soldier
brave
Who, for her and for her country, flinched not from a
soldier's grave!
No, poor boy, I'll not desert you, will not give you cause
to grieve,
But with pride and reverence ever will regard your empty
sleeve!'
Truly did she keep her promise all throughout her loving
life,
Causing me to bless the moment she became my precious
wife.

She is now among the angels, and I long to meet her there—
Well I know she went to heaven, she was good as she was
fair.

Do not flinch, my brave young grandson, when the hours
of peril come.

For your country don your armor, answer to the warning
drum,

And remember that above you, throned within the starry
skies,

There is One that ever sees you, watches you with loving
eyes ;

And if true to His commandments, He will welcome you
to Him

When the spectre Death o'ertakes you on his pale horse
gaunt and grim."

Then the old man's face grew whiter and his tongue refused
to speak,

While the tears coursed down the furrows of each time-
worn pallid cheek ;

But his eyes grew brighter, clearer ; to his cheeks came
back their hue,

As he beckoned unto something in the far celestial blue,

And his grandson heard him whisper : "Darling Belle, I
soon will come,

Soon I know will sound the summons, beat the angel's
warning drum."

In Warm July.

In warm July
My soul and I
Commune beneath the cloudless sky.
The hills around,
Mound under mound,
Run down to greet the level ground.

The playful air,
Without a care,
Skips here and there and everywhere
With laughing song
And cadence long,
That echoes far the crags among—

The creviced crags—
Where winter lags
When sunny spring-tide fleetly drags

IN WARM JULY.

With fingers bold
The mantle cold
Away, that round their bosoms rolled.

With golden smiles
Down leafy aisles
The sunbeams dance through dim defiles
In opal rings
On sleeping springs
That brood beneath the forest's wings.

Beyond the sheen
Of cedar green
That carpets deep the dusk ravine
Which lies below,
I catch the glow
Of water rippling to and fro.

In wooing way
The Georgian Bay
Holds up its dimpled arms to-day
Toward the hills,
Whence rippling rills
Leap downward with responsive thrills.

With half-closed eyes
I watch the skies
Salute the waters, lover-wise,
With lips of mist
Held to be kissed
Through filmy folds of amethyst,

That veil the dim
Horizon's rim,
And slowly rising soar and swim
Over the sea
Of forestry,
Majestic in immensity.

Creative hands,
Across the lands,
Obedient to my mind's demands,
With art remould
The manifold
And stirring scenes of times of old.

And presently
I seem to see
Below, in close proximity,
An Indian town
With lodges brown
Upon a tree-surrounded down.

Pappooses spry
Their gambols ply
Like chipmunks 'mong the spruces high,
And up the pines
With climbing vines
Mount in their mischievous designs.

In paint and plumes
The warrior looms
In stoic state, the while he fumes
Within with fires
Of fierce desires
To feast with foes' triumphal pyres.

The squaws, the slaves
Of haughty braves,
Prowl through the leafy architraves,
And meekly moil
With sodden soil
Their roughened palms in search of spoil.

The chieftains wise,
With crafty eyes,
In silence smoke in solemn guise,
Or hold converse
In language terse
On Iroquois, the Hurons' curse.

Around the place
With dainty grace
The spruces twine their arms, and trace
With fingers fair
And loving care
A warder warm 'gainst frosty air.

And over all
The peaceful pall
Of Nature seems to cast its thrall,
While insects sing
With shirring ring,
And toss their wooing notes a-wing.

But gloomy glades
And purple shades
Conceal e'en now in dim arcades
Of oak and pine
Full many a line
Of foemen fell on foul design.

From silent gloom
With knell of doom
The battle-bud bursts into bloom,
And petals shower
With fatal power
From the blood-tinted passion-flower.

The flower fades
In funeral shades,
And death through gory runnels wades
Till life has fled
On wings of red,
And solitude is king instead.

Time's sickle clears
A swath of years,
And then the pioneer appears
And 'mong the pines
His axe defines
The limits of his labor's lines.

From morn till night,
From dawn of light
Till dusk of eve, in sturdy night
The axes swing
With rhythmic ring
And victory triumphant sing.

My soul and I
In warm July
Commune beneath the cloudless sky.
Prophetic dreams
Twine with the gleams
The sunlight showers upon the streams.

A halo plays
Its mystic rays
Upon the deeds of coming days,
And distance dies
Before my eyes
Under the sweep of Northern skies.

The ocean's strand
On either hand
Limits the mighty stretch of land,
Whose lakes and isles
With sparkling smiles
Bedimple o'er its countless miles.

This wide domain,
Under the reign
Of Freedom, fills the free man's wain,
And in its hives
Of busy lives
The honest toiler strives and thrives.

From regions old,
Where famine cold
Has starved the weak, unnerved the bold,
Unnumbered bands
With empty hands
Are welcome to our bounteous lands.

Within our gates
Untold estates
Are waiting him who bravely waits
On fortune's hest
With earnest zest,
And waits in work and not in rest.

My soul and I
In warm July
Commune beneath the cloudless sky,
And see in dreams
Prophetic gleams
Of commerce streaming down the streams ;

Of wealth untold
In land and gold,
And all that gold can e'er unfold ;
Of billowed plains
Of golden grains
Athwart the prairie's vast domains ;

While Freedom stands
With lifted hands
And, beck'ning to despotic lands,
Invites the throng,
Down-trodden long,
To join with us in joyous song.

A Knight of the Forest.

As the glimmering key of dawn unlocked the gloomy bar
of night,
Out across the morning's lintel trooped the carriers of
light,
Tossing wide their rosy garlands o'er the casements of the
hills,
Till their flashing flower leaves fluttered in the dimples of
the rills,
That resplendent 'mid the fringes of the forest-tufted rocks
Shone like strands of silver twining through a maiden's
dusky locks.
Then the truant shades that loitered in the bosoms of the
glades,
E'en as mummers, morn-detected at their nightly mas-
querades,
Slunk off slyly through the meadows and across the
marshes gray
To evade the burning glances of the blushing damsel, Day,

While the ghostly mists grew golden as they folded up
their shrouds
And on wings of glory circled toward their home-land in
the clouds,
Flinging off the corpse-like torpor from their faces cold
and white,
Resurrected from the death-vaults in the dungeons of the
night.
Standing on a hill a hunter watched the dawning of the
day,
Saw the mountains multi-tinted flash their banners far
away
In a primal salutation to the signals of the lake,
That re-mirrored back responses from the forest and the
brake.
Then he gazed with hungry glances through the crimson
maple leaves,
Past the foam-wreaths on the river, round the headland's
terraced eaves,
That with exquisite gradations fluttered down into the
fold
Of a darksome den cascaded with a flaming thread of
gold ;
Past an oaken vista dreamy ending in a purple hill,
Crested by a tiny cabin, tawny-tinted, lone and still.
He had dreamed about that cabin as he wandered wide
and far
Through the cloisters of the forest, till it glistened like a
star

'Fore his mental vision ever, be the danger what it might,
That waylaid his weary footsteps or encountered him in
fight.

'Twas the morning of his bridal. Yonder dwelt his prom-
ised bride,

Unto him earth's fairest creature, golden-haired and loving-
eyed,

And he bounded gaily downward over boulders hooded
gray,

Little heeding crag-like ledges as he sped his winding way.
He had reached the oaken alley when a warwhoop sharp
and shrill

Rang its death-presaging echoes round the apex of the
hill,

And he dashed with headlong vigor through the tessellated
boughs,

With his fierce eyes scintillating 'neath his corrugated
brows,

From the flaming of his fiery soul, ablaze with surging
wrath—

Five to one they turned to meet him, racing madly up the
path.

Five to one—but fell the foremost bullet-riddled through
the brain ;

Four to one—but dropped the next one as the rifle flashed
again ;

Three to one—the weapon swinging then to left and then
to right,

Left but one to one fierce foeman, red-skinned brave to
hunter white.

Shrank the redman from the other, drawing back in sudden
fear—

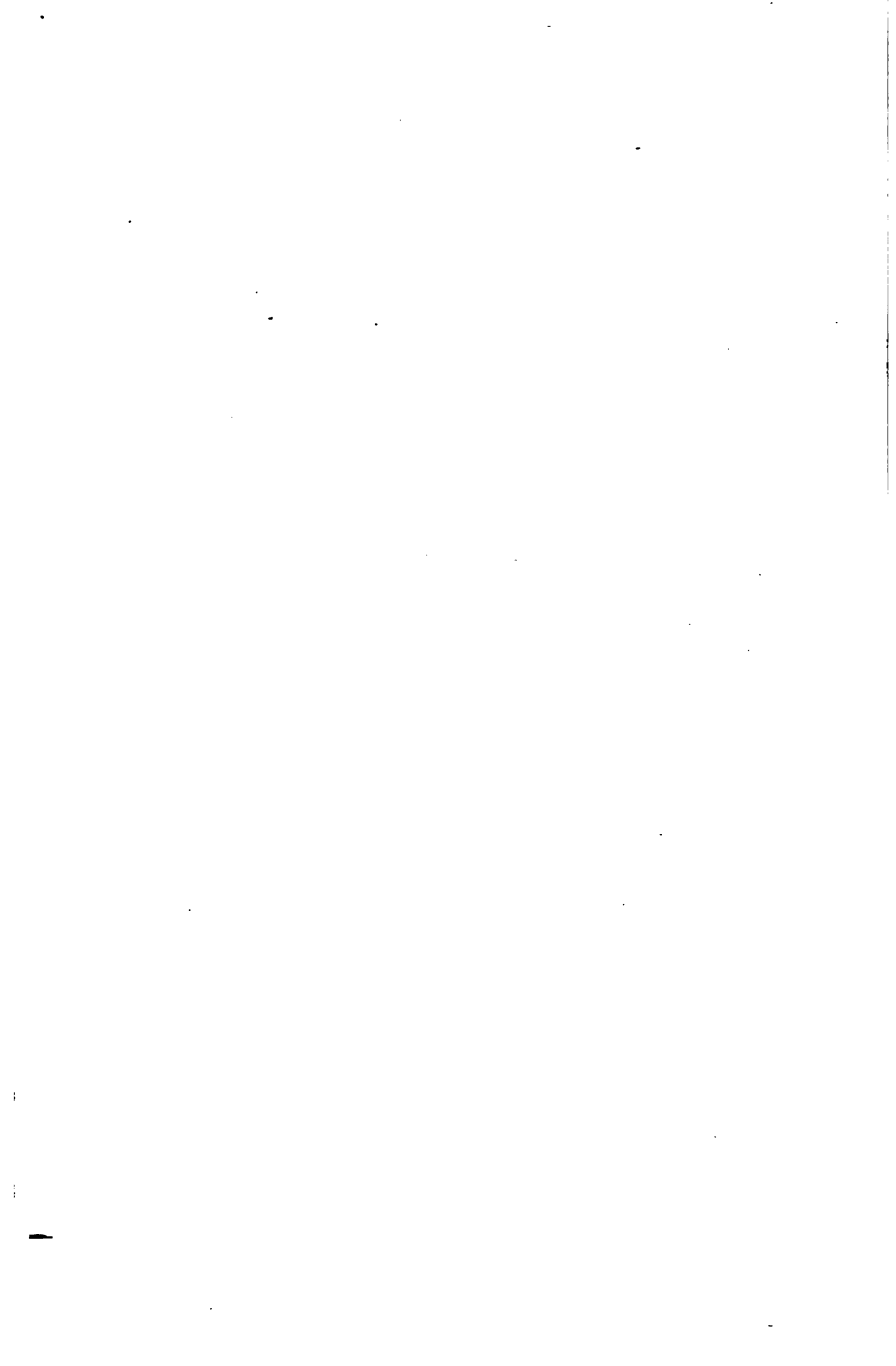
Once again the gun descended, and the bridegroom's path
was clear.

Then the knightly hunter, turning from his tourney flushed
with pride,

Was rewarded by a guerdon from the sweet lips of his
bride.







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